The Princess of Poverty

Saint Clare of Assisi and the Order of Poor Ladies

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S. FRANCIS S. CLARE

OF ASSISI.

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THE PRINCESS OF POVERTY

SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI

—AND—

THE ORDER OF POOR LADIES

FRANCISCAN FATHERS
Indianapolis, Indiana

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Indianapolis, February 20th, 1900,

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Die 12*a* Januarii, 1900.

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THE KELLER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO
EVANSVILLE, IND., U. S. A.

POPE ALEXANDER IV. ON S. CLARE:

"Clare is the Princess of the Poor,
The Duchess of the Humble,
The Mistress of Virgins,
The Abbess of Penitents."

(Bull of canonization of S. Clare, Anagni, September 26th, 1255.)

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RIGHT REV. FRANCIS SILAS CHATARD,
BISHOP OF INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

(From a Photo.)

Dedication.

To

The Right Reverend Father in God

Francis Silas Chatard, D. D.,

Bishop of Indianapolis,

THESE PAGES

ARE

HUMBLY AND REVERENTLY

INSCRIBED

BY

The Daughters of S. Clare,

of Evansville, Ind.,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OF

HIS LOVING KINDNESS

AND

FATHERLY PROTECTION.

BIBLIOTHECA
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CONV. PHILADELPH.

Preface.

SOME years ago, while residing in England, I was requested by the Poor Clares to write the life of their Venerable Mother and Founder, Saint Clare of Assisi. I most readily assented, as I always entertained the greatest reverence and esteem for the spiritual Daughters of the Saint on account of their truly humble and penitential lives. But circumstances prevented me from undertaking the work in real earnest, although at various intervals, especially when visiting the famous city which gave birth to the Saint and which still holds her sacred remains, I collected a good deal of useful and important material.

Since my arrival in this country, I have again been brought into intimate relations with the lowly Sisters of S. Clare, by whom the request has been again renewed. This time I set about the work resolutely, giving it all the time I could spare from my missionary labors.

Two particular facts make the appearance of a Life of S. Clare of Assisi quite opportune at the present time. The Daughters of S. Clare at Assisi are just now about to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Finding of the Body of their holy Mother, and special preparations are being made to do so with befitting solemnity. Besides this, twenty-five years have just elapsed since the establishment

of the Poor Clares in this country, an occasion of no small interest to at least the Sisters themselves as well as their friends and benefactors. Thus we have a union of jubilees coinciding with the great universal Jubilee of Grace and Mercy in this Holy Year of our Lord, 1900.

But, in looking over the material at my disposal, and consulting various modern works written on this subject, I was confronted with a difficulty, which, for a while, caused me to be at a loss how to treat the work. My original intention was to present to the reader a complete and connected history of the Saint's Life and of her Order. But I finally abandoned this idea. For I found that the different Lives I had read were all based upon an ancient biography of S. Clare written shortly after her death by order of Pope Alexander IV., the same Pope who also canonized her. Hence, instead of constantly referring to this authentic record, as other authors have done, I thought it more advisable to give a faithful translation of the same. The original Latin text which I have followed is the one given by the Bollandists, whose well-known pains-taking care is a sufficient guarantee for its authenticity. The collection of Franciscan documents I have seen at Assisi contains an ancient copy of this biography. A metrical life of the Saint may also be seen amongst these documents.

The biography is, moreover, well worthy of being placed before the public, even for its own intrinsic merit. Those who have read the "*Fioretti*" or "*Little Flowers of S. Francis*," have been charmed with the spirit of simplicity and devotion which pervades the work. Now this ancient Life is written in precisely the same strain. In fact, I was not a little surprised to find several occurrences narrated in both in exactly the same terms, word for word. I will instance the relation of the Seraphic Love-Feast, how S. Francis and S. Clare ate together at our Lady of the Angels, and were rapt in wondrous ecstacy; or of the marvelous sign of the

cross which appeared upon every loaf when S. Clare, at the bidding of the Pope, blessed the bread that was on the table. Who knows but that both documents may have been written by the same author?

True, indeed, the characteristic charm and beauty of the original is greatly impaired by being translated into modern English. In fact, quite a number of phrases and even whole passages had to be given a free rendering owing to the peculiarly quaint and epigrammatic style employed by the author.

Nevertheless, the biography is far from being a complete Life of the Saint.

It is, first of all, very brief, and merely touches upon the principal facts of the Saint's career, although this was done purposely by the author, who, as he himself declares, selected only a few out of the many facts, lest a multiplicity of things should confuse the reader.

Again, the biography is totally different from what one would naturally expect to find in a Life. The writers of the Middle Ages had their peculiar style and method. In compiling the Lives of the Saints they seemed to be strangely oblivious of everything except that which actually tended to establish the sanctity of the individuals concerning whom they wrote. Such matters as their parentage, the place and country of their birth, the history of the times in which they lived, their natural disposition and personal character, in fact, everything which illustrated only their human side, seemed to have for them no interest whatever. Even the precise record of dates, or the proper designation of historical personages, they sometimes had to introduce, were mere trifles which did not concern them. Neither did they, as a rule, adhere to the chronological sequence of events, but usually classified the various facts under some general headings of their chief virtues or miracles. In spite, however, of

these defects, their writings possess a charm of their own which cannot fail to impress itself upon the reader.

The ancient biography of S. Clare is, of course, subject to these imperfections. I have attempted to make up for these deficiencies by footnotes and by supplementary additions. To these I have subjoined a brief historical sketch of the Order of Poor Clares, and an account of the modern foundations, especially in this country.

Such is the work I now place before the public. I can lay no claim to originality. The production is merely fragmentary. However, I feel confident, that in spite of its short-comings, it will prove interesting to many, and that, with God's blessing, it will be productive of much good, and will, above all things, become the humble instrument of leading many an earnest soul from the snares of a seductive world into the safe harbor of the peaceful cloister.

FATHER MARIANUS FIEGE,
O. M. Cap.

ST. ANTHONY'S HOUSE, FRANKLIN, IND.
Within the Octave of the Epiphany,
January 11th, 1900.

Introduction.

The Religious State an Integral Element of the Life of the Church.

THE Church is the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, established by Him to perpetuate His Divine Mission on earth and apply to each individual soul the merits of His Redemption. Through the Church, therefore, Jesus Christ continues to live and labor on earth. Hence, the Church must, at all times, fully represent the Life of our Divine Lord. The Holy Ghost, Who is the soul of the Church, adequately expresses the Divine character of Christ. For the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, sent by Him from the Father to quicken and guide the Church. The vast body of the Faithful, united together and incorporated with Christ by the Holy Ghost, represents the human character of Christ. The lives of the ordinary Faithful reflect the virtues of the private Life of our Lord, whereas the members of the Sacred Priesthood represent our Lord in His public ministry.

But we find in the Life of our Lord a higher and nobler degree of moral perfection which never could be observed by the generality of men and which was, therefore, placed before men by our Divine Lord Himself, not as a command,

but as a counsel. Hence, we have Gospel-precepts, binding upon all men under pain of sin, and Evangelical Counsels for those who wish to follow more closely in the footsteps of their Divine Savior by the practice of voluntary Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. And the observance of these Three Evangelical Counsels forms the constituent principle of the Religious State. Therefore, it follows that, without the Religious State, the Church would not be the perfect representation of Christ's Life upon earth. And, in fact, the Religious State, in one form or another, has always existed in the Church from her very foundation, so that the history of the Church is inseparably bound up with the history of Religious Orders.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

THERE exists in the Church a countless variety of Religious Orders and Societies; but there are only four great Religious Rules, strictly so called. Two of these, those of S. Basil (329-379), and S. Augustin (354-430), had their rise in the Eastern Church; the other two, those of S. Benedict (480-543), and S. Francis (1182-1226), in the Western Church. Now, between the Order of S. Benedict and that of S. Francis there was an indissoluble connection, the Franciscan Order succeeding that of S. Benedict in logical sequence. The Benedictines exercised a most wholesome influence over the people as they were passing from a barbarous or semi-barbarous condition to the state of Christian civilization. Hence, the Order of S. Benedict may rightly glory in having been mainly instrumental in introducing

Christianity and civilization into nearly every part of Europe.

But civilization, though attended with innumerable blessings, nevertheless, became, little by little, the vehicle of many and great evils. It gave rise to individual wealth and prosperity, not unfrequently obtained by the oppression of the weak and the poor. In the higher classes, it engendered pride and contempt of the poor; in the lower classes, it produced enmities and discontent. It opened the way to endless private feuds in which frequently cities and entire districts were involved. Thence arose hatred and jealousy, factions and party strife, and all the dread horrors accompanying civil wars. No wonder that ignorance and moral corruption soon permeated every rank of society. It is to this disordered state that the author of the ancient biography of S. Clare refers in his Prologue, and history confirms the statement.

Now what were the Benedictines, and other Religious Orders, doing in those days? Individual members may doubtless have been good and earnest men, fulfilling their duty most conscientiously. But, as a body, they could not cope with the serious evils that afflicted the Church and society at large. And this should surprise no one. For, in the ordinary course of events, monasteries, like all other religious and civil corporations, had acquired vast possessions, and had, in most instances, become extremely opulent. That this was for the benefit and welfare of the poor is perfectly true. But that it was, at times, detrimental, also, to the Religious Orders themselves, is equally true. What is quite certain is this, that, as a body, they could do nothing to remedy that deep-rooted and wide-spread corruption. Something new was needed.

People had to be taught, in a practical manner, not to discard the advantages of civilization, but to use them rightly so as not to lose sight of God and of the supernatural end

for which they were created. Yet people had become too much engrossed with worldly and temporal affairs, and too much attached to earthly things. Hence their eyes had to be opened, and their thoughts and aspirations had to be raised to higher ideals. The fire of Christian Charity, which had been almost extinguished in the hearts of men, had to be fanned into a new and hallowed flame. Now all this could not be done by the mere display of oratory from learned pulpiteers or the outward observance of Divine worship, however magnificent, carried on in grand and imposing cathedrals. It could only be accomplished by the force of personal example, and that implied personal sacrifice.

People themselves felt that something of this kind was needed; for faith, though dormant, was not dead. For this reason, there sprung up, from time to time, certain popular movements, seeking to curb the evils arising from excessive wealth and luxury. But they failed; some ran riotous; some even degenerated into heretical sects. Witness the Waldenses.

Men needed a leader, a leader sent by God, stamped with the seal of Divine authority. And the choice of Divine providence fell in a very singular manner on the poor and lowly Francis of Assisi. There were others, too, raised up along with him, chiefly S. Dominic, his faithful brother-in-arms. But Francis became the great leader of Christian peoples. Wherefore to him came that mysterious call: "Francis, go, and repair My church, which, as you see, is falling into ruin." And Francis obeyed that call; and how successfully he carried out the Divine command, is a matter of history.

For us, who live at a distance of nearly eight hundred years, it is almost impossible to form a correct idea of the actual work done by S. Francis and his Institutes. But when grave historians assert that it was mainly due to the personal influence of S. Francis and the influence of his three great Orders, that a wholesale Christian Reformation was

brought about in a very short time, they are guilty of no exaggeration, but merely speak the plain truth.

And how could it have been otherwise? Francis, being especially enlightened and guided by God, went straight to the root of the evil. He applied the axe to the root of the tree, and fatally wounded the monster that held enslaved the hearts of men. This he did by bringing back into the world, right before the eyes of all men, holy Evangelical Poverty, so long forgotten and despised by men. Therefore, the virtue of Poverty became the key-note of his whole life and the corner-stone of his Religious Orders. Personally, he divested himself of all earthly possessions, which must have been great, for he was the son of a wealthy merchant. He even gave back to his father the very clothes he wore, and gratefully accepted a peasant's garb given him in charity. Through S. Francis, Religious Poverty assumed quite a new character. Hitherto, Religious Poverty had not excluded landed property and possessions held in common. But Francis enjoined on his followers, the Brethren of the First Order, to be poor, not only individually, but also in common. Their houses were to be modeled, not after the palaces of the rich, but after the humble dwellings of the poor. They were to own neither houses nor lands; they were to have no fixed income or revenue of any kind. And even the little they had for their use was to be held by others, so that each one could say in all truth, he was but a pilgrim and stranger on this earth. They were to live by the labor of their hands, humbly accepting as an alms, whatever was given them in recompense. And should, at any time, the recompense not suffice for their daily needs, they should then not be ashamed to beg their bread from door to door, as veritable paupers.

The Second Order of S. Francis was based upon the same absolute Poverty and self-denial. And the spirit of holy Poverty and detachment from all earthly possessions, was made the leading feature of the Third Order.

THE FRIARS MINOR AND THE POOR CLARES.

S. FRANCIS of Assisi performed a complete work by the establishment of his three Orders. By his First, or that for men, and by his Second, or that for women, he provided for those who, like himself, wished to renounce all earthly things and consecrate themselves entirely to God's service. By his Third Order, he provided for all Christians in the world who were in earnest to serve God more faithfully and save their souls more securely.

But there is a special relation of fitness and harmony between the First and the Second Order.

God had said in the beginning: "It is not good for man to be alone." And hence woman was given him as a companion. This applies not merely to the narrow circle of domestic life, but, likewise, to all great movements, political and religious. I do not hesitate to say that nothing great has ever been accomplished by man without the beneficent influence of woman. For this reason, God was pleased to associate S. Francis and S. Clare in the great work of moral reform; and from that day to this, the sons of S. Francis and the daughters of S. Clare, have worked together, side by side, for the salvation of souls. The Brethren of the First Order are like the soldiers who are actively engaged on the battle-field. It is their place to fight openly against the empire of sin and vice, and induce people, by word and by example, to enroll themselves under the standard of Jesus Christ, and to follow in His footsteps. Now while the Brethren are thus

exposed in the very thick and turmoil of the fight, they are powerfully aided in the work of saving souls by the Sisters, shut up in the retirement of the cloister, kneeling before their heavenly Spouse, beseeching Him in earnest prayer, by tears and supplications, by their stainless and mortified lives, to spare the souls redeemed by His Most Precious Blood. Just as Moses of old knelt in fervent prayer with hands outstretched to heaven while his soldiers were fighting in battle, and thus, by his prayers, secured the victory, so also are these devout souls kneeling, day and night, before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, with eyes and hands uplifted in constant prayer. Only at the Last Day will the world know all it owes to the powerful influence of these devoted daughters of S. Clare of Assisi.

PART FIRST.

Ancient Biography[1]

OF

The Venerable Virgin S. Clare

OF ASSISI.

Written by order of Pope Alexander IV.

PROLOGUE.

God's Providence ever watches over His church.

THE world was growing old; the eyes of its faith were becoming obscure; and the pace of its moral rectitude unsteady; all manly strength seemed to have vanished. The times, indeed, were abject and evil. Sin and vice were in the ascendant. But God, true lover of humanity, from the depth of his loving wisdom, raised up new Religious Orders,[2] by which He munificently provided for the renewal of faith and the correction of morals. These new leaders,[3] with their faithful followers, could truly be styled the lights of the world, the harbingers of the way, the instructors of life; for, through them, on the world at twilight, there arose the dazzling midday splendor, so that those who walked in darkness of night might behold the light.

[1] The author of this biography is unknown. It was written most probably by Friar Thomas of Celano, the same who also wrote the first life of S. Francis.

[2] The Orders of S. Francis and of S. Clare.

[3] S. Francis and S. Clare.

Woman ordained by God to be the helpmate of man.

Now it was meet that the weaker sex, buffeted in the maelstrom of passion, drawn alike by a sentiment of pleasure and her natural frailty, should contribute to this end. For this purpose, God, in His goodness, chose the Venerable Virgin Clare, and, in her, He erected for womankind a most brilliant light. And you, Most Holy Father,(1) have set her upon a pedestal that she might illuminate all of the household; for moved by manifest signs and wonders, you have enrolled her upon the calendar of the Saints.(2)

Pope Alexander a special friend of the new Orders.

You we venerate as the Father, you we recognize as the Protector, you we proclaim the Guardian, you we honor as Master of these Orders. For your concern in behalf of the guidance of the Bark of Peter does not exclude anxious care concerning the welfare of smaller craft.

The writer yields to the command of the Pope to compile the life of S. Clare.

Your Holiness has been pleased to charge me to relate the acts of S. Clare and compile her Legend.(3) Submission to your Pontifical Authority impels me to attempt a task from which my inability deters me. Hence nerving myself for the work imposed, yet fearing to make use of the imperfect accounts I had read, I had recourse to the companions[4] of Blessed Francis and also visited the Monastery[5] of the Holy Virgins of Christ. For I recalled the injunction of the ancients that "no one is qualified to write history unless he has either personally seen the things he narrates or has obtained them directly from trustworthy eye-witnesses." Becoming thus thoroughly ac-

(1) Pope Alexander IV, 1254-1261.

(2) At Anagni, on the 11th day of August, 1255.

(3) LEGEND literally means that which is to be read. And, whereas, in houses of Religious Orders the usual matter appointed for public reading was taken from the lives of the Saints, it obtained the meaning of a pious and edifying narrative of the life of some Saint or Holy Servant of God. If sometimes the word Legend is used to signify myth or fable, this is commonly done by those who, either through ignorance, or out of prejudice against the Catholic Church, deny the wonderful lives of her Saints as incredible, and, therefore, devoid of historic veracity.

[4] A number of these were present at the death of S. Clare, and gave sworn evidence of the virtues and miracles of the Saint.

[5] The Monastery of San Damiano, outside the walls of Assisi, the scene of Clare's religious life and holy death.

quainted with the truth, I have, with simplicity of style, and fear in the Lord, reduced the same to writing. Yet I do not mention everything, but, on the contrary omit many things that could be told. For while it will please, and even delight, cloistered Virgins to read in detail the praises of the Holy Virgin S. Clare; other minds, less cultured, would only be confused by a multiplicity of facts.

Francis an example for men; Clare for women.

Let men walk in the footsteps of the new Disciples of the word made flesh; let women copy the example of Clare, a true follower of the mother of God, and the leader of a new company of women.

The author submits his writing to the judgment of the Pope.

As for myself, Most Holy Father, I unreservedly submit my will in all things to that of your Holiness, inasmuch as it belongs to you, by virtue of your Supreme Authority, to amend, erase, or augment, whatever I have written.

Fare you well in the Lord, now, and for all time! Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CLARE'S HOLY BIRTH; HER SAINTLY CHILDHOOD; HER CONVERSION[1] TO A MORE PERFECT LIFE; HER CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE.

Clare's birth-place and parentage.

THE admirable Virgin S. Clare, illustrious by her virtues, as indicated by her very name,[2] descended from a renowned family in the city of Assisi. A fellow-citizen of Blessed Francis on earth, she now reigns with him in heaven. Her father was a noble knight;[3] and in fact, the family was of illustrious lineage on both sides. Her home was blessed with abundant wealth.

Piety and devotion of Clare's mother.

Her mother's name was Ortolana, who was, indeed, an excellent laborer in the garden[4] of the Church; for she was to plant in it a tree that was to bear most ample fruit. She was, in addition, endowed with personal merit and good works. For although bound by the ties of marriage, and obliged to attend to household affairs, she devoted, nevertheless, as much of her time as she could spare to God's service and works of piety. In company with other pilgrims she crossed the sea; and having devoutly

[1] Conversion does not always denote the return to God from a life of sin, but often means turning to a more perfect state of life. In this sense, the Saints are wont to call the day, on which they turned to God by a total abdication of the world, the day of their conversion.

[2] Clare—Latin, *Clara*—means shining, illustrious.

[3] Count Favorino Scefi.

[4] Ortolana—Latin, *Hortulana*—means gardener.

venerated the sacred places, hallowed by the foot-prints of the Son of God, made man, she returned home with great joy. She, in like manner, went to Monte Gargano[1] to offer her prayers to Blessed Michael, the Archangel; and she also journeyed to Rome to revere the shrines of the Holy Apostles.[2]

Mysterious forewarning concerning the birth of S. Clare.

But enough. "A tree is known by its fruits" and the fruit is praiseworthy because of the tree. Here the tree itself was fructified by a copious blessing from on high, so that its branches might produce abundant fruits of holiness. When Ortolana was with child and her time was near at hand, she, one day, prayed, with great fervor, before a Crucifix in a certain Church that she might safely pass through the perils of child-birth. Suddenly she heard a voice saying: "Fear not, woman! For you shall bring forth a light whose rays shall illumine the whole world."

Birth of S. Clare.

Shortly afterwards the child was born,[3] and received in Baptism[4] the name of Clare, at the express wish of the mother, on account of the mysterious voice she had heard, being persuaded that the lustrous effulgence of the light, which had been foretold, would be fully verified, according to God's own pleasure.

Early indications of Clare's future Sanctity.

Clare was still a mere child, when the splendor of her light began to dispel the sombre shadows of the world, and diffuse, in her tender years, the radiance of a virtuous life. With a docile heart she learned from her mother's lips the rudiments of faith, and as the Divine Spirit kindled in her

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[1] Monte Gargano in Apulia, famous on account of the wonderful apparition of S. Michael, the Archangel, under the Pontificate of S. Gelasius (492-496).

[2] SS. Peter and Paul.—The Sanctuaries of the Holy Land, the Shrines of the Holy Apostles in Rome, and S. James Compostella in Spain, were the three most famous resorts of devout Pilgrims in the middle ages, and are enriched with numerous indulgences.

[3] The 16th Juy, 1194. Clare was not the first born child. For particulars see Part II.

[4] Clare was baptized at San Rufino, the Cathedral Church of Assisi, in the same font in which, twelve years before, Francis had been regenerated. The font may be seen at the present day, bearing a Latin inscription which calls the attention of the visitor to the fact that Blessed Francis had there been baptized.

heart the fire of His love, and molded her character, so she outwardly gave unmistakable signs of being a most pure chosen vessel of Divine Grace.

Clare's charity to the poor from her childhood.

She gave to the poor with a lavish hand and supplied the needs of many out of the abundance of her house, and that the sacrifice might become the more acceptable to God, she deprived her own body of all delicacies and had them secretly distributed, thus cheering the hearts of the poor and the fatherless. In this way "mercy grew up with her from her infancy"[1] and she manifested the tenderness of her heart by pitying the sorrows of the afflicted.

Her love of prayer and contempt of he world.

She loved the practice of holy prayer, so that, she gradually began to lead, in her own home, the life of a recluse, scattering around her the sweet odor of fervor. For want of a better means, she used pebbles[2] to count the number of her prayers. As soon as she began to feel the first shafts of Divine Love pierce her soul, she instantly understood the right value of earthly things and esteemed them no more than vain and earthly trifles, being taught so by the unction of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, under her soft and rich attire, she wore a hair shirt, putting on Christ internally, while outwardly appearing to conform to the world in accordance with her state in life. Being, at length, desired by her people to contract a suitable marriage, she in nowise yielded, but, under pretext of putting off the marriage, commended her virginity to God.

The virtuous life of Clare, in her father's home, did not remain hidden.

Such were, in her paternal home, her sweet offerings of virtue; such her first-fruits of the Spirit, presages of her future holiness. Thus, filled with the unction of grace, she dispensed abroad the sweet fragrance of virtue, as a vessel of sweet-smelling spices, even when closed, fills the air with its aroma. In this way, unconscious and unwilling as she

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[1] Job, XXXI, 18.

(2) This was the common practice of the ancient Fathers of fhe desert, and of many others, before beads, such as we have now, were more universally employed.

was, the praise of her goodness and the fame of her virtuous deeds, even when done most secretly, soon became noised abroad.

Clare converses with Francis.

About this time, she heard of Francis,[1] whose fame had already gone forth, and who, having himself first "put on the new man,"[2] labored with all his might to bring about in the world a renovation of Christian perfection. She, therefore, earnestly desired to see and hear him. In this resolution, too, she was moved by the Spirit of God, Who, all along, had been guiding these two chosen souls, though in a different manner. On the other hand, Francis, moreover, had heard of the fame of the holy maiden, and he also was anxious to see and converse with her. For he was wholly intent upon thinning the ranks of the lovers of this world and winning souls for God. Hence he wished, if possible, to snatch this noble prey out of the reach of a wicked world, and to lay her as an illustrious trophy on the altar of God. He soon had occasion to call upon her, and, after that, she paid him frequent visits. Yet they prudently arranged the time of these meetings in such a way that their holy intention could not be perceived by men, nor give the least rise to suspicion. For in her secret visits to the man of God, whose burning words and holy deeds seemed to her to be superhuman, she never left her father's home except in the company of a faithful friend.[3]

Francis urges Clare to give herself wholly to God.

On these occasions, Blessed Father Francis would exhort her to despise the world, showing her, in glowing terms, the barrenness of all worldly hopes and the deceitfulness of all earthly beauty; and then he would instill into her soul the sweetness of the espousals with Christ, proving to her that the pearl of virginal purity was a befitting offering to be

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[1] S. Francis was born at Assisi in the year 1182, and was, therefore twelve years older than S. Clare.

[2] Ephesians, IV., 24.

[3] Her aunt Buona Guelfuccio, who shared in the noble aspirations of her niece, and who, afterwards, was among the first, if not the very first, of her spiritual daughters.

S. Clare Receives the Palm from the Bishop of Assisi.

(*From a painting by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

made to the heavenly Bridegroom Whom love drew down upon earth to espouse human nature.

Clare resolves to consecrate her virginity to Christ.

But why multiply words? At the entreaties of the saintly Father, Who acted as a most faithful intermediary, she was not long in giving her full consent. And, forthwith, there was opened out to her a vision of the eternal joys, a sight which made the world appear more despicable, which caused her heart to dissolve yet more with a holy yearning, and which made her long still more ardently to perfect her espousals with the heavenly King. For, glowing with Divine Love, she so thoroughly despised the glory of earthly vanity, that not a particle of human praise found a place in the affections of her heart, and, dreading the snares of the flesh, she proposed to herself to remain ignorant even of the very name of sin, desiring to consecrate her body as a living tabernacle to God alone, and striving to merit the espousals of the great King by the practice of virtue.

She wholly submits to the guidance of Francis.

Henceforth she yielded entirely to the guidance of Francis, looking upon him as being, next to God, the pilot of her spiritual course. Her soul now depended entirely upon his sacred counsels, and she listened to him with the utmost fervor of heart, whenever he spoke to her concerning the love of Jesus. She grew more and more weary of being still compelled to parade in worldly apparel, "counting all things," which the world admires, "as dross so as to gain Christ."[1]

Francis advises Clare when and how to leave her father's house.

Lest the contagion of this world should cast the least stain upon the spotless mirror of her soul, and lest worldly intercourse should, in any form, tarnish the innocence of her pure heart, Francis now hastened to take her out of this dark and treacherous world. It was close upon Palm-Sunday, when she again presented herself before the man of God, to consult him about her conversion, begging of him to tell her what to do and how to do it. Blessed Father Francis

[1] Philippians, III., 8.

ordered her to repair in the morning to the church, dressed in her most festive attire, and, along with the people to receive the blessed palm; but that, on the night following, she was "to go forth to Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach,"[1] leaving behind her every earthly joy, to bewail, thenceforth, the bitter passion of her crucified Redeemer.

Clare secretly leaves her home by night, not without some miraculous occurrences.

When Sunday came, Clare went to Church along with the rest, in the company of a number of young damsels, surpassing them all by the splendor of her rich and elegant dress. Then there happened an event worth mentioning. When all the faithful hastened to receive the blessed palm, Clare, out of maidenly modesty, remained in her place. The Bishop perceiving this, descended the steps, approached her seat and placed a palm branch in her hand. That same night, she prepared herself to carry out the command of the Saint; and accompanied by some attendants, who formed her suit of honor, she started on her premeditated flight. Not wishing to leave the house by a public exit, she went to a side gate and finding it obstructed by huge stones and massive posts, she pulled down every obstacle with her own hands, so that she herself was astonished at the wonderful strength with which she was so suddenly endowed.

Clare dons the garb of penance and the new Order is placed under the protection of Mary.

Thus she left her home, her city, her friends and relatives, and hastened to Our Lady of Portiuncula where the Brethren, who were keeping night-watch in the little sanctuary, received her with lighted torches. Here she disrobed herself of all fineries that to her appeared but as sordid rags compared to the livery of poverty. She had now done with the world forever. Her hair was cut off, and every outward ornament laid aside.(2) Nor was it proper that the new Order of Virgins should be established in any other

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[1] Hebrews, XIII., 13.

(2) This took place on the night of the 19th of March; 1212, Clare being then 18 years of age.

place than the sanctuary of her who, being the most exalted among women, is the first and only one who, at once, is both Virgin and Mother. It was here, likewise, that the new Militia of the poor under the leadership of Francis had made a happy beginning. Thus it was plain that the Mother of Mercy wished both those Orders to be born under the shadow of her sanctuary.[1] As soon as the humble handmaid of the Lord had received the vesture of penance before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin and been espoused to Christ before the very throne of the Mother of God, Francis conducted her to the Church of San Paolo[2] to remain there until the Most High should provide her with another domicile.

Opposition of Clare's relatives.

When the report of these events reached the ears of her kinsfolk, they were filled with grief and roused with indignation, strongly condemning the whole proceeding. Uniting together, they rushed to San Paolo to induce Clare to return home. They used violence, employed all manner of reasoning, and added magnificent promises, if she would only desist from conduct so unworthy her noble family and unheard-of throughout the whole country. But she clung to the altar-cloths, and bearing her head, shorn of its hair, she declared her fixed determination that nothing should ever turn her away from the service of Christ. In proportion as the fury of her relations increased, so increased her courage; and the more they taunted her with insults, the stronger became her love. She thus suffered persecution for God's sake a number of days, her relatives continuing to oppose her sacred purpose. Yet her courage never failed and her fervor never abated. And while they heaped opprobriums upon her, and vented their rage in every way, she remained calm, being sure of victory. At last, cowered by Clare's courage and baffled in their attempts, they withdrew and left her in peace.

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[1] The Blessed Virgin under the title of the Immaculate Conception, has been the principal Patron of the Threefold Order of S. Francis from the very beginning.

[2] A Monastery of Benedictine Nuns within the city of Assisi.

San Damiano the final abode of S. Clare, the first Monastery and Mother-house of the New Order of Poor Ladies.

A few days later she transferred her abode from S. Paolo to San Angelo di Pansa;[1] and as here also her mind was not yet fully at rest, she went, upon the advice of Blessed Francis to the church of San Damiano. Here she took up her permanent abode, being no longer compelled to move elsewhere. She did not shrink from it on account of the narrowness of the place, neither did she fear solitude. This is the church for the restoration of which Francis had labored with wonderful zeal and had offered the priest a large sum of money. This is the church in which Francis, while engaged in prayer, had heard, one day, a voice from the Crucifix, saying: "Francis, go, and repair My church which as you perceive, is completely falling into ruin." In this narrow cell, Clare shut herself up out of love for her heavenly Bridegroom. Here she imprisoned her body, as long as she lived, to be secure from the raging tempest of the world. Like a dove, she here made her nest "in the hollow places of the wall."[2] Here she became the Mother of a College of holy Virgins. Here she founded a sacred Monastery, and commenced the Order of Poor Ladies. Here, in this narrow retreat, she lived, for a period of forty years, a life of most austere penance, the redolence of which perfumed the whole world. But the holiness of her life will appear more clearly by pointing out how many, and what noble souls were, through her, led to Christ.

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[1] Another Monastery of Benedictine Nuns, situated outside the city of Assisi not far from the Sanctuary of Portiuncula.

[2] Canticles, II, 14.

CLOTHING OF S. CLARE.

(From an engraving by Adrian Colhaert, 1609.)

CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC FAME OF THE VIRTUES OF S. CLARE; HER LOVE OF HUMILITY AND POVERTY; THE MIRACULOUS MULTIPLICATION OF BREAD AND OIL.

Clare's holy life draws innumerable souls to follow her example.

SOON the fame of the sanctity of the Virgin Clare spread throughout the neighboring Provinces, so that women were "drawn" from all parts "to run after her to the odor of her ointments." [1] There were Virgins who, after her example, hastened to consecrate their virginity to Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, while married women endeavored to live more chastely. There were noble and illustrious maidens who forsook stately palaces to build for themselves poor narrow cloisters where they deemed it the greatest glory to live hidden with Christ and do penance in sack-cloth and ashes. There were men and youths who, not wishing to be outdone by the heroic efforts of the weaker sex, vied with them, in holy conflict, to despise the allurements of the flesh. Some, in fine, already joined in holy matrimony, promised, by mutual consent, to observe the law of continency, and there and then separated, the men to swell the ranks of the First Order, the women to follow S. Clare. Mothers exhorted their daughters, daughters their mothers, to dedicate themselves to Christ; sisters besought sisters, nieces aunts, and

[1] Canticles, I, 3.

aunts nieces; all desired to serve Christ, emulating each other in holy fervor. They were all anxious to adopt the angelic mode of life, traced out by S. Clare. There was a vast number of young Virgins, who, moved by the glowing accounts they heard concerning the holy life of Clare, but unable, for pressing reasons, to embrace the cloistered life, endeavored to live as Religious in their own homes, without being bound by monastic rules. So great was the number of those whom Clare, by her example, gained for a better life that, in her, seemed to be fulfilled the words of the Prophet: "Many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband."[1]

The fame of Clare's holy life penetrates into distant countries, and monasteries of the New Order spring up everywhere.

Lest the new source of heavenly blessings, which had sprung up in the Valley of Spoleto, should, in a short time, dry up, Divine Providence ordained that it should grow into a mighty river, so that "the stream of the river should make the city of God joyful."[2] For the rumor of the marvelous tidings soon spread, far and wide, into distant parts, and, everywhere, her example began to gain souls for Christ. Clare, though shut up in the cloister, thus began indeed to enlighten the world and to become illustrious by the praises of all people. The fame of her virtues penetrated the chambers of noble ladies and the palaces of queens and princesses. The fairest flowers of nobility stooped to follow her lowly example, and the pride of royal blood was brought low by holy humility. Many, deserving by their rank to be given in marriage to kings and princes, followed in the lead of Clare and did penance. Many widows, who had been married to the mighty ones of this world, enrolled themselves under the standard of Clare. Her monasteries soon adorned cities without number, and even country districts and mountain peaks were beautified with the dwellings of these angels of peace. Thus, through the holy example of Clare, a new

[1] Isaias, LIV, 1.
[2] Psalms, XLV, 5.

impetus was given to the practice of holy chastity in the world, and in the cloister, there was brought about thorough revival of the Order of Virgins. With such flowers of rare and exquisite beauty, the Church has happily been made verdant in these days of ours, according to Clare's own longing: "Stay me up with flowers; for I languish with love."[1]

But our pen must revert to our former purpose and make known what manner of life the Holy Virgin led in the cloister.

The great humility of the holy Abbess.

Clare, the corner-stone and the noble basis of the Order, endeavored, from the very beginning of her religious career, to raise the edifice of all virtues upon the solid foundation of holy humility. She had promised Blessed Francis holy obedience, and from this promise she never deviated. When the first three years of her religious life had passed, she declined the name and office of Mother Abbess, and, out of her great humility, she wished to be subject rather than govern, and "to minister" to the hand-maids of Christ "rather than to be ministered to."[2] But being commanded by Blessed Francis to undertake the government of the Poor Ladies, she did so at once. The new office, however, produced in her heart fear rather than vanity and made her still more desirous of becoming the servant of all. For the more she saw herself raised above others by reason of her office, the more despicable she became in her own eyes, and the more eager to be despised by others. She never shrank from the most menial offices of the community, such as drawing water, assisting the Sisters in their daily household duties, and serving at table. It was much against her will that she ever issued any commands. She would rather, of her own free will, do the thing herself than impose it upon others. Thus she waited upon the sick Sisters, making

[1] Canticles, II., 5.
[2] Matth., XX., 28.

their beds, cleaning their cells, and washing their clothes with her own hands. Nothing disagreeable or unpleasant could ever keep her from these lowly services. She would often wash the feet of the Lay-sisters,[1] returning home from their duties abroad, and having washed their feet, she was wont to kiss them. One day, as she was washing the feet of a certain Lay-sister and as she was about to kiss them, the Sister, unwilling to bear such marks of humility, instantly withdrew her feet; but, in so doing, she inadvertantly struck the abbess in the face. The abbess smiled, and, seizing the foot with both her hands, imprinted a loving kiss upon the sole of the foot.

Her extraordinary love and practice of most high Poverty.

Poverty of spirit, which is intimately allied to true humility, was practiced by the holy Abbess in the highest degree. She had, in the very beginning of her religious life, caused to be distributed amongst the poor whatever was due to her from her father's inheritance, retaining for herself nothing whatever. Having thus left all earthly things and being enriched internally, she could follow Christ in His Poverty, without let or hindrance. In fine, she made with holy Poverty a strict compact, or contract of love, to the end that she would not desire anything on earth but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor would she tolerate her daughters to possess anything, or receive, or lay up, anything beyond what was truly necessary for food and clothing. For she knew that this most precious pearl of the Gospel, which she had purchased by selling all things, could not be possessed along with an inordinate solicitude after the goods of this earth. She frequently impressed upon the Sisters that their Order would be pleasing to God so long as it would abound in holy Poverty, and that it would never cease to exist, provided it was safe-guarded by the bulwarks of most holy Poverty. She exhorted them to keep within the safe abode of holy

[1] The Lay-Sisters live outside the enclosure of the cloistered Nuns and attend to all business transactions, though at the time of S. Clare the law of strict enclosure was not yet in force.

Poverty, after the example of Christ Who made Himself poor for our sakes, and Whom His Blessed Mother, in her great poverty, placed as a Babe, in a poor narrow manger. This special fact she used to keep before her eyes as a constant reminder of holy Poverty, and placed it, so to speak, as a precious gem around her neck, ever gazing upon the poverty of Jesus and Mary, in order that attachment to anything earthly should never steal into her heart.

A singular request asked for and obtained.

Anxious to secure for her Order the title of Poverty, she demanded of Pope Innocent,[1] of happy memory, the perpetual privilege of most holy Poverty.[2] This great Pontiff, while congratulating Clare upon her great fervor, declared that her's was a singular desire, since no such privilege had ever before been demanded of the Holy See. And to commemorate such a remarkable petition, with an unusual favor, the Pope with great joy, wrote the first words of the document with his own hand.[3]

S. Clare rejects all revenues even when offered by the Pope.

Pope Gregory,[4] of holy memory, a man in every way worthy to occupy the Chair of Peter, and full of merits, greatly loved the Holy Virgin with paternal affection. As he was trying to persuade her, one day, that in view of the vicissitudes of the times and the dangers of the age, she should consent to own some possessions for the benefit of the community—which he at the same time, also most liberally offered out of his own means—she resisted with an unshaken resolve and would in no wise yield to his entreaties. To whom the Pontiff said: "If it be the vow[5] that hinders you, we absolve you from that vow." Whereupon she replied: "Holy Father never will I consent to be absolved from following Christ."

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[1] Pope Innocent IV, 1241-1254.

[2] This refers to the solemn approbation of the Rule, and is fully explained in Part II.

[3] See Part II.

[4] Pope Gregory IX, 1227-1241.

[5] The Poor Clares who follow the First Rule are obliged by their vow of Poverty to hold no possessions in common.

Whenever the Questors[1] came back from their errands of charity with scraps of food and morsels of bread, which they had received in alms for the Poor Ladies, the Holy Abbess greatly rejoiced. But when they brought whole loaves she was grieved. Crumbs were more in accordance with her idea of poverty. In short, she labored with all her strength to be "made conformable," by a most rigid poverty, "to the image of the Son of God,[2] made Man, Who was born and Who died in abject poverty, so that nothing on earth might ever separate her from the love of her Beloved One, or hinder her from closely walking in His footsteps.

There are two miracles which she merited to perform on account of her great love of holy Poverty.

Miraculous multiplication of bread.

Upon a certain day, it so happened that but one single loaf of bread could be found in the Monastery. Meal-time had arrived, and the Sisters were hungry. The Saint called the Sister in charge and told her to divide the loaf, sending one half to the Friars and retaining the other half for the Sisters. Next she ordered her to make upon the remaining half fifty incisions, according to the number of Sisters, break it and then serve at table. When the good Sister remarked that a special miracle of Christ would be needed to multiply that little piece of bread into fifty portions, the Holy Abbess simply said: "Peace, my daughter! Just do as I tell you." The Sister went to .comply with the Mother's request. Meanwhile the Mother hastened to cast herself at the feet of her beloved Spouse and sent up her sighs on behalf of her daughters. And lo! While the Sister was engaged in breaking the bread, it miraculously multiplied in her hands, so that there was more than enough for the whole community.

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[1] The Lay-Brothers commissioned to collect alms for the Poor Ladies. Francis had promised Clare and her daughters that he would charge himself and his Order to take care of them. Hence a few Friars usually inhabited a small hospice close to the Monastery of Poor Clares, the Priests to attend to their spiritual needs, the Lay-Brothers to their material necessities—a custom still observed in some places.

[2] Romans, VIII., 29.

Miraculous supply of oil.

At another time, the supply of oil[1] had entirely given out, so that not even the poor sick Sisters had any seasoning for their food. Clare took the vessel used for oil, and with great humility, first washed it with her own hands, and then placed it outside so that the soliciting Brother might take it. The Lay-brother was called and asked to solicit oil. The devoted Brother, anxious to relieve their need, ran to fetch the vessel. "But it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but God that showeth mercy."[2] For through the all-powerful intervention of God, and the prayers of S. Clare, the vessel was found filled with oil, and thus the kind services of the Brother were not needed. The said Brother, however, finding he had been summoned in vain, was at first, somewhat annoyed and said: "These good Ladies are having a joke with me; for behold! the vessel is quite replenished with oil."

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[1] Olive Oil, commonly used in southern countries of Europe, such as Italy, as a condiment in preparing the most ordinary kinds of food. Hence its privation would entail a grave inconvenience.

[2] Romans, IX., 16.

CHAPTER III.

S. CLARE'S AUSTERE MANNER OF LIVING, AND HER EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

Clare's penances not confined to the common acts of mortification.

IT would be better perhaps to pass over in silence, than to attempt to describe, the extraordinary penances with which S. Clare used to afflict her body, since the bare recital of them is calculated to cause the reader to shudder or doubt of their veracity. It was a small thing that her clothing consisted of a plain habit and mantle,[1] made of coarse woolen material, just large enough to cover the body, but not sufficient to keep it warm. It was a small thing that the use of shoes or other covering for the feet was entirely ignored by her. It was a small thing for her to live the whole year round upon lenten fare and to sleep upon straw. In all these matters, no special praise is due to her; for this was the common practice of all the Sisters. Let us, however, mention a few facts.

A rough hair-shirt afflicts her delicate body.

She usually wore a rough hair shirt upon her delicate body. One was made of pig skin, with the bristles of about an inch in length still upon it, so as to torture her body. The other was made of twisted and knotted horse hair, fastened around her body with rough cords. One of the Sisters

[1] Among the relics preserved by the Poor Clares of Assisi are to be found the Habit and Mantle worn by the Saint, as well as an inner tunic, a black veil and one of her hairshirts. The Habit is described as very coarse, and so narrow that one cannot understand how S. Clare could have walked in it. It is also very long, which proves that S. Clare was of more than ordinary height. The Mantle, too, is very poor, coarse and heavy. The inner tunic is nothing but a tissue of patches, placed over one another. The hairshirt is made of horse-hair, and one cannot touch it without pricking one's fingers.

S. Clare Resists the Entreaties of her Relatives.

(*From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

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asked her one day to lend her this hair-shirt, and the Abbess complied. The Sister, however, could not endure it long, but brought it back on the third day with much greater readiness than she had shown in asking for it.

Her bed the bare ground or a little straw.

The bare ground, or sometimes faggots of brush-wood were her bed, and a block of wood her pillow. Being bound, in the course of time, to allow her weakened body a little indulgence, she took her repose upon a skin spread out on the ground with a pillow of straw under her head. And when, finally, on account of so much severity, she was afflicted with continual illness, Blessed Francis commanded her to use for a bed a sack filled with straw.

Her excessive rigor in fasting.

So rigorous was her fasting and abstinence that the little nourishment, she allowed her body, was wholly insufficient to sustain life unless supported by supernatural aid. As long as she was in good health, she fasted upon bread and water, during the entire church Lent[1] as well as that of S. Martin[2], tasting no wine[3] except on Sundays, when there was any. And be it known to you, dear reader, that, throughout the whole of these two Lents, she absolutely tasted no food whatever during three days each week, namely on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays—a thing well worth our admiration, but hardly possible of imitation. In this manner, the days of Lent succeeded each other in such a way, that one day she abstained from food altogether, and the next day took nothing but bread and water, as though a vigil of absolute fast was a preparation for a feast upon bread and water. No wonder that such excessive rigor kept up for a number of years, rendered her in the end a victim to a multitude of infirmities and deprived her body of all strength. Her affectionate daughters, seeing her practice such daily mortifications, were full of compassion and even

[1] From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday.

[2] From the feast of S. Martin, Bishop of Tours, the 11th of November, until Christmas day.

[3] In Italy wine is the common beverage of even the poorest people.

shed tears. She, was, however, finally commanded both by S. Francis and the Bishop of Assisi to abandon these three days of absolute fast, and to take each single day at least one ounce and a half of bread for her repast.

No trace of sadness or weariness in spite of her penances.

A wasted body usually affects the spirit, but not so with Clare. She always preserved a pleasant and cheerful countenance in spite of her penances, as though she seemed either not to feel the necessities of the body, or be wholly superior to them. Thus the abundance of interior joy which filled her soul, manifested itself outwardly in the body. For when once love has taken complete possession of the heart, the sufferings of the body count for nothing.

Her exceeding great love of holy prayer.

Dead to the world as to her body and entirely weaned from earthly things, her whole soul hung upon the constant practice of holy prayer and divine praises. The eyes of her mind were always fixed with the utmost fervor upon the contemplation of heavenly things, and in proportion as her soul soared high above mundane things, so her heart was enlarged to receive the abundant showers of Divine Grace. Every day after Compline, she remained with the Sisters in choir absorbed in silent prayer. And while she would break forth into sighs and tears, the others, carried away by the force of her example, were moved in like manner. When at length the Sisters retired to their rude cells to seek some repose for their wearied limbs, she would continue her night-watches alone and remain steadfast in prayer to catch the secret whisperings of the Divine Spirit. On such occasions she would cast herself upon her face and bedew the ground with her tears and kiss it, as though she lay at the feet of Christ and desired to wash them with her tears and cover them with fervent kisses.

The tempter vanished by her fervor of spirit.

One dark night as she was engaged in prayer, an angel of darkness stood suddenly before her in the form of a negro boy who approached her, saying: "You will surely go blind with so much weeping." To whom she quickly replied:

"They shall never be blind who shall see their God." Upon this, the devil fled in confusion. But that same night, after Matins, as she was praying in her usual manner amidst tears and sighs, the tempter again approached her and said: "So much weeping will soften your very brain, and it will flow through your nostrils like water." "They who serve their God, need to be afraid of nothing," was her prompt reply, and the tempter vanished.

The visible effects of her fervor in prayer.

What strength she received from the practice of her fervent prayer, and with what sweetness the Divine Bounty overwhelmed her, showed itself in a number of ways. Whenever she returned from prayer, there was such joy and happiness depicted on her countenance, and such ardor in her words as to set the hearts of the Sisters all on fire. There was such sweetness in her conversation, and oftentimes her face shone with such heavenly radiance, that the Sisters marveled. Indeed, "God in His sweetness, had provided"[1] for His humble handmaid. That celestial light with which her mind was replenished, shone forth bodily in her outward behavior. While thus still living in this perishable world, she was already intimately united to her heavenly Bridegroom, and tasted of the delights of Heaven. Though still subject to the miseries of life, she seemed to be above them, being upheld by a superior power, and to carry about in her mortal body the treasures of heavenly glory. In the flesh she indeed still lived on earth, but with her mind she was already in heaven.

Her love of prayer shown in small matters; her vigilance on this point in regard to others.

She usually rose for Matins before any of the younger Sisters, whom she herself was accustomed to summon for prayer. Often, while the others were still asleep, she would light the lamps, ring the bell[2] and prepare everything for Divine Office. In her community, the body was allowed

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(1) Psalm LXVII, 11.

(2) The small bell with which S. Clare used to summon the community for prayer is still preserved with great veneration at San Damiano.

no self-indulgence; there was no room for idleness. If at any time the least sign of sloth or remissness in prayer or the Divine Office showed itself, a severe reprimand would at once check the fault.

Here it will not be out of place to relate some of the wonderful facts, caused by the efficacy of the prayers of S. Clare.

San Damiano, together with the city of Assisi, saved from the ravages of the Saracens by the prayers of S. Clare.

That fierce tempest which the Emperor Frederic [1] raised against the Church in diverse parts of the world, also caused the Valley of Spoleto to drink frequently of the bitter cup of ire and vengeance. At his imperial command, squads of soldiers and bands of Saracens,[2] well skilled in archery and as numerous as swarms of bees, had been stationed there to destroy fortified places and ravage towns and cities. Assisi, a city dear to God, was to share the common doom. A furious attack was made, and the soldiers stood already within close approach of the city gates. A number of Saracens, a most lawless set, thirsting after the blood of Christians and shrinking from no crime, had gathered around San Damiano and already advanced to the walls of the cloister. The Sisters full of terror, ran trembling and weeping to their Mother. But she, nothing dismayed, caused herself to be led—for she was ill at the time—to the main entrance in the full sight of the enemy. Before her was carried the silver pyx cased in ivory,[3] containing the Body of her Divine Savior, and, prostrate before Him in prayer, she said to Him amidst many tears: "Behold, my Lord, wilt Thou permit Thy handmaids whom I have brought

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(1) Frederic II, King of Naples and Sicily and Emperor of Germany 1194-1250 invaded the Papal States in order to annex them to his empire, was a third time ex-communicated by Pope Innocent IV at the first Council of Lyons and deposed from his empire, yet fought to the end and died miserably, abandoned by all.

(2) When Frederic was crowned Emperor of Germany at Aix-la-Chapelle, he had promised Pope Honorius III to undertake a crusade, but put it off under various pretexts; being excommunicated by Gregory IX, he went to Palestine; at his return he brought with him troops of Saracens whom he employed in his wars against the Papal Power.

(3) Still preserved as a precious relic in the Monastery of San Damiano.

up in Thy love to be delivered into the hands of Pagans? Defend, I beseech Thee, O Lord, these Thy handmaids whom I myself am unable to defend at this hour." Instantly a voice was heard, as that of a little child, saying: "I will always protect you." "Be pleased also to defend," she continued, "this city which is sustaining us for love of Thee." And the Lord said to her: "The city will be troubled, but shall be defended by My protection, and your intercession." Then Clare, turning her tearful countenance towards her weeping daughters, consoled them, saying: "I assure you, my daughters, that you shall suffer no harm; only place your trust in our Lord." When behold! the fierceness of those ferocious pagans abated in an instant. Those who had already scaled the walls, fell backwards, and all of them quickly dispersed and took to flight. Such was the power of the Saint's intercession. She strictly charged all who had heard the mysterious voice never to reveal it during her life.

Assisi saved a second time through Clare's intervention.

At another time, Vitalis Aversa, a man full of ambition, and most valiant in war, led the Imperial army,[1] of which he was general, against Assisi. He caused the country to be bared of all its trees and the whole district to be laid waste, and then prepared to besiege the city itself. He swore in menacing words that he would not leave the spot until he had the city in his possession. The city was in imminent danger from the besieging host. When Clare heard this, she was filled with great grief and sorrow, and having called together the Sisters, she said to them: "You know, my dearest daughters, how many benefits we daily receive from that city; now it would be most sinful on our part if we failed at this critical moment, to come to its assistance, as far as we can." Then she ordered ashes to be brought, and told the Sisters to bare their heads. First she strewed ashes upon her own head, and then upon the head of each Sister in turn. "Hasten now," she said, "to our Lord and beseech

(1) of Frederic II.

Him with all your hearts to liberate the city." The rest need not be told. Who could describe the sighs and tears and vehement prayers that then rose up to the Throne of Mercy! The following morning, the citizens made a desperate attempt to beat back the enemy, and, with God's merciful assistance, they succeeded to such an extent that the entire army was routed. The arrogant leader was compelled to seek refuge in flight without being able to keep his oath. Neither did he ever after trouble that district any more, and shortly after the Emperor himself perished by the sword.(1)

Clare obtains, by her prayers the conversion of her sister Agnes.

Neither must we omit the wonderful event wrought by the efficacy of Clare's prayers in the very beginning of her religious life, how she obtained the grace of religious vocation for her own sister, and how she rescued her from the persecution of her relatives. Clare had a sister, tender of years,(2) a sister not merely by the ties of nature, but also in purity and holiness. No wonder that she was most anxious to have her for a companion in the cloister. Consequently the first prayers she offered to God were directed to this end that, as she had been of one mind with her sister in the world, so they might now be of one heart and soul in His Divine Service in the cloister. For this reason she prayed most fervently to the Father of Mercies that He might inspire her sister with contempt of the world and the desire of heavenly things; that she might thus forego all natural ties of earthly marriage, however honorable, and together with her be espoused by perpetual virginity to the Heavenly Bridegroom. The two sisters had always loved each other most affectionately, and the separation had become, for both, the source of much sorrow. But the Divine Majesty was pleased to speedily hear the prayers of Clare, so that the very first favor for which she was asking with so much fervor—a petition which was moreover, in itself, most acceptable to God

(1) Being murdered by his natural son, Manfred.
(2) 12 years of age.

—was granted without delay. Sixteen days had passed since Clare had retired from the world, when Agnes—such was her sister's name—moved by the Spirit of God, hastened to her, and, opening to her the secrets of her heart, told her she was most anxious to devote herself entirely to God's service. Clare embraced her sister with great joy and cried out: "O how much I thank God for having heard my prayer in your behalf!"

Agnes persecuted by her kinsfolk.

This wonderful conversion was followed by a protection no less wonderful. While the two happy sisters were engaged in the service of Christ in the Church of San Angelo di Pansa, Clare acting as Mistress of Novices in regard to her younger sister, to instruct her in the new mode of life, fresh persecutions were set on foot against them by their relatives. Twelve of their kinsmen, hearing that Agnes had gone over to Clare, ran, the very next day, to the Church of San Angelo. They were filled with rage, yet they concealed their cunning purpose under a calm and peaceful exterior and then entered the place. Turning to Agnes—for they had now given up all hopes concerning Clare—they said: "Why did you come to this place? Get ready at once, to return home with us." When she answered that she was resolved never to leave Clare, one of the Knights, unable to contain his fury any longer, rushed upon her and brutally assailed her with blows and kicks, and then seizing her by the hair, began to drag her away. The others had, meanwhile, ran forward to assist their companion, lifting her up in their arms to carry her away. Agnes, finding herself seized, as it were, by savage beasts, and snatched away from the embrace of her Divine Lord, loudly called upon Clare, saying: "Help me, my dearest sister, and do not permit me to be separated from my Lord!" Her captors were still dragging her down the slope of the hill, Agnes resisting with all her might. Her garments had been torn to pieces and her hair was scattered about in handfuls. Clare

had meanwhile fallen on her knees, beseeching her Divine Lord with tears in her eyes, to endow her sister's soul with fortitude and to bring to naught the attempts of men by His Almighty Power.

Agnes miraculously delivered through the prayers of her sister.

Suddenly the body of Agnes became so firmly rooted to the ground and so heavy, that all of them with their united efforts could not carry her over a little brook they had to cross. They asked a number of men who were engaged in the vineyards and in the fields close by to help them. But even then they could not raise the body in the least. Seeing themselves baffled in their attempt, some of them treated the evident miracle in a scoffing fashion, saying: "She must have been eating lead all night; no wonder she is so heavy." But when one of her uncles, Count Monaldo, in his rage, drew his poignard to stab her, the hand which held the weapon was seized with a most acute pain which troubled him for a good while after. At this conjuncture, Clare appeared upon the scene of conflict and begged her kinsfolk to desist from all further attempts, and to leave Agnes, who lay there half dead, to her care. And while they, with bitterness in their hearts, walked away without having accomplished their purpose, Agnes rose up full of joy, and glorying in the cross of Christ for Whom she had fought this first battle, she now devoted herself forever to His Divine service. Blessed Francis cut off her hair with his own hands and instructed her along with her sister in the way of the Lord. Finding it impossible to describe, in a few words, the great perfection to which she attained, we will return to Clare.

The demons expelled through Clare's prayers.

No one need wonder that Clare's prayers were so powerful against the malice of men, since they vexed even the demons of hell. A devout woman from the diocese of Pisa came, one day, to the Monastery to thank God and S. Clare, that, through her merits, she had been freed from five evil spirits. For when the devils were being expelled from her,

CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF SAN DAMIANO,
ASSISI, ITALY.

PRESENT CONDITION.

(*From a photo.*)

they declared that the prayers of S. Clare fearfully tormented them and caused them to leave the bodies of the possessed.

The Pope recommends himself to the prayers of S. Clare.

It is not without cause that the Lord Pope Gregory [1] had great faith in the prayers of the Saint, since he often experienced their wonderful power and efficacy. For frequently, whenever any great difficulty arose—as it happened in the course of events—both while he was the Bishop of Ostia and even afterwards when raised to the See of Peter, he would recommend himself by letter,[2] to her prayers, and was always wonderfully assisted. Neither is it astonishing that the Vicar of Christ should implore the aid of a handmaid of Christ and commend himself to her virtues. It, at once, betokens his humility and demands our imitation. For he well knew what love can do, and how freely pure virgins have access to the council chambers of the Heavenly King. For if the King of Heaven gives Himself to them that love Him, what is there He will refuse to their prayers?

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(1) IX.
(2) See Part II.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. CLARE'S REMARKABLE DEVOTION TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST AND THE CROSS OF CHRIST, AND HOW BY THE SIGN OF THE CROSS SHE WROUGHT DIVERS MIRACLES.

Clare makes corporals for the Blessed Sacrament.

HOW great the devotion of S. Clare was towards the Blessed Sacrament is shown by the following facts: During that painful illness, which confined her to bed, she had herself raised and propped up, so as to be in a sitting position; and in that posture she wrought some of the finest linen, out of which she made a large number of corporals, (1) enclosing them in cases of silk or purple, and had them distributed amongst the various churches of Assisi and the surrounding district.

Clare's fervor at Holy Communion.

Whenever she was about to communicate, she always shed an abundance of tears, and then approached with great fear and trembling, fully realizing that He, Who was there hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, was no other than the Sovereign Ruler of Heavén and earth.

Clare consoled with a Heavenly vision.

As in her infirmities she was ever mindful of Christ, so Christ also deigned to visit her in her affliction. One Christmas night, when earth and heaven join to sing the praises of the Babe of Bethlehem, she was left alone upon her bed of sickness, the Sisters having gone to the choir to chant Matins. As she began to meditate upon the Holy

(1) Some of these corporals are still preserved among the Relics by the Religious of S. Clare at Assisi.

Child Jesus, she sorrowed at not being able to be present at the solemn midnight services and said amidst many tears: "My Lord and my God! Behold, here I am left all alone in this place," and lo! suddenly the festive chant of the Friars miraculously resounded in her ears. She distinctly heard their joyful and harmonious voices amid the solemn sound of the organ. The place was at a good distance, so that naturally it was quite impossible that the music could have reached her ears, unless the sacred function was, by a miracle, brought nearer to her, or her hearing had suddenly been endowed with preternatural power. But that was not all. She was even permitted to see the crib and the Holy Infant lying in a manger. When next morning her daughters came to her, she said to them: "Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, when you left me, did not abandon me. For by the grace of Jesus, I have indeed been present at the solemnities celebrated in the Church of the Friars."

Clare's devotion to the Passion of Christ.

But the sufferings of her Divine Lord were her favorite theme. The contemplation of His Sacred Wounds filled her at one time with grief and compassion, at another with a holy joy. To mourn over Christ nailed to the Cross quite transported her; and He, Whom love had so deeply impressed upon her heart, was ever present to her mind. She taught the Novices to bewail the sufferings and the death of Christ, and what she taught by word she exemplified by her own actions. For very often her exhortations on this subject were cut short by an abundant flow of tears. At Sext and None, her soul was more than usually affected, desiring with all her heart, to be immolated with Christ, Who had offered Himself on our behalf. Once it happened that, while reciting the office of None, alone in her cell, the devil struck her a fearful blow on the face, so as to cause her eyes to be suffused with blood and her cheek to become livid. To feed her mind without interruption upon the Sorrows of her Saviour she frequently recited a prayer in honor of the Five

Wounds of our Lord.[1] She likewise learned by heart and very often repeated with great devotion the Little Office of the Passion of our Lord, composed by that lover of the Cross, the Blessed Father Francis, and upon her flesh she wore a cord with thirteen knots to be a secret reminder of the Wounds of our Savior.

Clare falls into ecstacy while meditating upon the sufferings of Christ.

On a certain occasion, the day had arrived on which we commemorate the Last Supper by which our Lord "loved His own unto the end."[2] Towards evening at the approach of the agony of our Lord in the Garden, Clare, sad and sorrowful, retired to the solitude of her cell, and as she followed in spirit our Lord praying in the Garden, her own soul became sorrowful unto death at the consideration of His great sorrows; and beholding in Spirit how He was seized upon and insulted, she became, little by little, bereft of her senses. During the whole of that night and the following day, she remained wholly absorbed and totally insensible to everything external. She was seated upright in bed with her eyes wide open and immovably fixed upon one spot, being entirely intent upon the sufferings of Christ. The serving Sister, charged to wait upon her, came several times to see if she needed anything, and always found her in the same position. But when Friday night approached the devoted servant lighted the candle and made the usual sign to remind the Mother of the precept of S. Francis. For the Saint had commanded her not to pass a day without taking some refreshment. When at last, through the endeavor of the Sister, Clare recovered her senses, she said: "What need is there of the candle? Is it not day-light?" "Mother," said she, "night has gone, and a whole day has passed, and night is once more at hand." "Then," said S. Clare, "that has been a long sleep, yet God be praised for it. For that

(1) See Part II, where this beautiful prayer is given at full length.

(2) John XIII, 1.

which I so much desired has at length been granted to me, and beware lest you tell anyone while I live."

Miracles wrought by the Sign of the Cross.

Her love for Jesus Crucified was not without its reward. For being inflamed with such great love for the mystery of the Cross she received the gift of performing signs and wonders by the power of the Cross. Whenever she applied the Sign of the Cross to the sick, they would at once be delivered from the sickness. I will mention a few out of the many facts:

Stephen, a Friar, delivered from insanity.

Stephen, a Friar, had been inflicted with insanity. Francis sent him to the Lady Clare that she might make the saving sign of the Most Holy Cross upon him. For he knew the greatness of her holiness, and he reverenced the magnitude of her virtues. Clare, a true daughter of obedience, obeyed the command of the Blessed Father and signed the brother with the Sign of the Cross. She then made him recline a little in the spot where she was wont to offer her prayers. After a brief slumber, the brother rose up, perfectly sound, and returned to the Holy Patriarch free from the least touch of insanity.

A boy relieved from a grievous obstruction.

Mathiolo, a little boy of the City of Spoleto, aged three, while playing with marbles, had unwittingly put one up his nose. There it stuck fast, so that the child could not eject it, nor anyone else extract it. Suffering great agony, he was taken to the Lady Clare, who made the Sign of the Cross upon him, and immediately the boy was relieved of the obstruction.

Another boy healed of a sore eye by Ortolana at Clare's request.

Another boy of Perugia, having one of his eyes wholly covered with a sore, was brought to the humble hand-maid of Christ. She touched his eye, making upon it the Sign of the Cross, and then said: "Take him to my mother that she may repeat the Sign of the Cross over him." For her mother, the Lady Ortolana, having lost her husband, had followed her daughter and embraced the religious life, and as a widow was serving the Lord in the solitude of the cloister

in the company of the Holy Virgins. Ortolana repeated the Sign of the Cross as requested and the boy's eye was at once freed from every blemish so that he could see with it quite clearly and distinctly. Clare, therefore, asserted that the boy had been healed through the merits of her mother, but she turned all the praise upon her daughter, declaring herself wholly undeserving of such a favor.

Sister Benevenuta freed from a malignant ulcer.

Benevenuta, one of the Sisters had been suffering, for twelve years, from an ulcerous wound under her arm which had broken out in five different places, from which matter constantly discharged. Clare, the Holy Virgin of God, touched with compassion, applied the usual remedy, peculiar to herself, and no sooner had she made the Sign of the Cross than the Sister was perfectly healed in an instant, every trace of the long-standing ulcer having disappeared.

Sister Amata cured of dropsy.

Amata, another Sister, who for thirteen months had been suffering from dropsy, was finally laid low with fever and attacked with violent fits of coughing and great pain in her side. Clare was moved to pity at the sight of her sufferings, and at once had recourse to her customary remedy. In the name of Christ, she made upon her the Sign of the Cross, and the Sister was instantly restored to perfect health.

Another Sister recovers the use of her voice.

Another hand-maid of Christ, a native of Perugia, had for two years, lost her voice, so that she could scarce utter a sound. On the night of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, it was shown her in a vision, how the Lady Clare had cured her. With great desire she longed for the morning. As soon as the light of day appeared, she hastened to the good mother, asked her to make the Sign of the Cross over her, and, having obtained her request, she, there and then, fully recovered her voice.

Hearing restored to Sister Christina.

Yet another Sister, called Christina, had been deaf in one ear for a long time and employed a number of remedies without obtaining relief. The Lady Clare kindly made the

Sign of the Cross upon her head, touched the ear, and her hearing was restored immediately.

Five Sisters healed at once.

Upon a certain occasion, quite a number of Sisters lay sick in the Monastery, afflicted with various ills. Clare entered the Infirmary to apply her customary remedy. Five times she made the Sign of the Cross, and five Sisters forthwith rose up, being restored to perfect health.

From all these facts, it is clear, that the Cross was deeply rooted in her heart like unto a tree, the fruit of which refreshed the Soul and the leaves of which yielded a wholesome remedy for the body.

CHAPTER V.

SOLICITUDE OF THE HOLY ABBESS FOR HER SUBJECTS; HER ECSTASY WITH S. FRANCIS; THE MIRACULOUS BLESSING OF LOAVES.

Clare instructs her daughters with special care.

SINCE Clare was the teacher and mistress of those whose minds were as yet untutored, and since she was, as it were, the head and the guide of the Daughters of the great King, she instructed them in all matters appertaining to the spiritual life with such fervor, and, at the same time, entertained for each one of them such devoted love, as cannot be expressed in words. She taught them, in the first place, to exclude from their minds all noisy tumult, so that they might be able to enter into the inner chamber of the great King. She taught them, next, to lay aside all carnal affections for their kinsfolk, and forget their home and country so as to please Christ alone. She exhorted them to despise the demands of the perishable body and to subject the conceits of the flesh to the dictates of reason. She showed them how the crafty enemy is wont to lay snares for pure souls; how he tempts men differently; how he tempts those, who are striving to lead holy lives, after one fashion, and those who are of the world, after another fashion. Finally, she set aside certain hours each day for manual labor, in obedience to the universal command of their Creator and to avoid idleness, so that, having somewhat relaxed the tension of their minds by the work of their hands, they might afterwards return to the exercise of holy prayer all the more

NOBLE LADIES BEGGING S. CLARE TO ADMIT THEM INTO THE ORDER.

(From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.)

readily and with greater fervor, and thus dispel all coldness and negligence in their spiritual duties. And her holy teaching bore ample fruit. Nowhere was there more rigorous observance of the law of silence, nowhere could there be found greater beauty of saintliness, or greater pursuance of all things meet and just. There was heard no frivolity of speech, and there was seen no levity of character. Their spiritual mistress herself was sparing in words; yet she knew how to convey in a few words the greatness of her thoughts and aspirations.

Clare's love and esteem for the Word of God.

Through the medium of devout teachers, the holy Abbess provided her spiritual daughters with the food of the Word of God; neither was she less anxious in this matter on her own account. For she usually experienced such joy and sweetness in hearing the Word of God that, one day, when Friar Philip of Adria was preaching, all at once a most lovely boy stood by her side, overwhelming her with his caresses during the greater part of the sermon. One of the Sisters, who was favored to behold the heavenly vision, was herself filled with ineffable sweetness and delight.

Clare appreciates a good sermon.

Though Clare was not skilled in letters, she nevertheless enjoyed listening to a well-prepared and learned discourse, being convinced that the kernel of doctrine, if hidden within the shell of cultivated words, is more easily discerned and more heartily relished. At the same time, she knew how to extract spiritual profit from any sermon; feeling certain that, at times, it is more prudent to seek for roses among wild thorns than to expect palatable and nutritious fruit from the best cultivated trees.

Her displeasure at being deprived of the visits of the Friars.

When, on a special occasion, the Lord Pope Gregory[1] had forbidden the Friars to go to the monasteries of the Poor Ladies without his express permission, the loving Mother, fearing that now her daughters would but rarely receive the food of Sacred Doctrine, said with great bitterness: "For the

[1] IX.

rest, let him now take from us all the Brethren, since he has taken from us those who furnished us with the bread of the soul." And she at once sent back to their Minister all the Brethren, desiring to make no further use of their services for providing them with bodily food, since she could have no longer those who would supply them with the spiritual food of the Word of God. When Pope Gregory heard this, he immediately revoked the prohibition and left the matter in the hands of the Minister General.

Clare's anxiety for the bodily welfare of the Sisters.

Yet not only did the venerable Abbess love the souls of her daughters, but she also attended with most loving care to their bodily needs. Very often, when the nights were very cold, she would, with her own hands, place warmer covering upon the sleeping Sisters. Whenever she saw any of the Sisters not well able to follow the strict community life, she would tell them to content themselves with a less rigorous observance. If any one was troubled with temptation or seized with sadness,—as it sometimes happened—she would call them secretly aside and console them amidst tears of sympathy. She would sometimes cast herself at the feet of those who were disturbed or melancholy and, with a mother's tenderness chase away all sadness and sorrow. Nor were her daughters ungrateful for such loving services, but endeavored to repay her with all devotedness. They loved her as a mother with tender love and affection; they respected her by reason of her office as superior; they tried to walk in her footsteps as their teacher of the way of perfection; they admired in her the spouse of Christ, endowed with the prerogatives of the Saints.

Francis requested to allow Clare to break bread with him.

Whenever Francis, the servant of the Most High God, stayed at Assisi, he would oftentimes visit Clare, the Spouse of Christ, and delight her with his holy admonitions. Now, she had often besought the Blessed Francis to grant her the consolation of once breaking bread with him. But S. Francis always refused. Whereupon the companions of the holy

Father, beholding the desire of S. Clare, said to Blessed Francis: "Father, it seems to us that this severity is not altogether according to divine charity, inasmuch as you will not grant the petition of Clare, a virgin so holy, and so beloved of God, especially since through your preaching she abandoned the riches and vanities of the world. Why then should she not be allowed to take food with you? Surely, if, with the same constancy, she had asked you for a much greater favor, you should have granted it to her, your spiritual daughter."

Francis yields.

S. Francis replied: "Does it then seem good to you that I should grant her this request?" Upon which his companions said: "Yes, Father, she deserves to have this consolation." S. Francis answered: "Since it seems good to you, it also seems good to me. But that her consolation may be greater, I wish that the breaking of bread shall take place at S. Mary of the Angels. She has now been shut up so long at San Damiano that it will give her great pleasure to revisit the place of our Lady, where her hair was shorn and where she became the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ. There let us eat together, in the name of the Lord." On the day appointed, Clare left the monastery, [1] and accompanied by one of the Sisters and some of the companions of the Holy Patriarch, she came to Saint Mary of the Angels. They first saluted the Most Blessed Mother of God with great reverence and humility and then devoutly went through the whole place till the hour for dinner had arrived.

They fall into ecstacy, which is seen by the people as a vast conflagration.

The lowly and godly S. Francis had caused the repast to be served upon the bare floor, as he was often wont to do. Then they sat down to the meal, S. Francis and S. Clare and one of the companions of S. Francis with the companion of S. Clare, and all the other companions took each his place with great humility. But before tasting any food, Francis

[1] The Rule of Perpetual Enclosure was not in force before Boniface VIII. [1294-1303]. whose decree was renewed by the Council of Trent [1545-1563].

began speaking of God so sweetly, so sublimely, and altogether so wondrously, that S. Francis himself, and S. Clare, and her companion, and all the others that were seated at the table of poverty, were rapt in ecstacy and were all filled with an abundance of heavenly favors. And as they were thus seated upon the ground, rapt in ecstacy, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, it seemed to the inhabitants of Assisi and Bettona and the country round about as if Saint Mary of the Angels and the whole place, and the wood which was near the place, were burning brightly; for it seemed as if a great fire had seized the church, and the whole place, and the wood altogether. Hence, the inhabitants of Assisi came running with great haste to give their help, firmly believing that everything would be destroyed by the fire. But when they arrived on the spot, they saw everything whole and intact, and entering the house, they found Blessed Francis together with Blessed Clare and the aforesaid company, rapt in ecstacy, seated around the humble meal, endowed with power from on high. They then understood that it had been a Divine fire which, on account of the devotion of these holy men and women, had lit up the whole place with a flame of Divine love, and they retired, greatly consoled and edified.

The Sisters of San Damiano rejoice at the return of S. Clare.

But S. Francis and Blessed Clare and all the rest, having been refreshed so abundantly with Divine consolation, cared little or nothing for any other food. Having partaken of this heavenly repast Blessed Clare returned to San Damiano. When the Sisters saw her they rejoiced greatly, for they were afraid S. Francis would send her to govern some other Monastery, as he had sent her sister Agnes to Florence as Mother Abbess. For at that time Francis used to send Sisters as Superiors to different places; and at one time he had said to Clare: "Hold yourself in readiness to go whithersoever I shall send you." But she, as a true daughter of obedience, replied: "I am ready, Father, to

obey, no matter whither you shall send me." Hence the Sisters were overjoyed when they had her back again. And Blessed Clare remained ever after, greatly consoled in the Lord.

Clare visited by the Sovereign Pontiff.

S. Clare, the devout disciple of the Cross and precious plant of S. Francis, was so holy that not only Bishops and Cardinals, but even the Holy Father himself very much desired to see and hear her, and frequently went to visit her in person. Once the Pope (1) came to the Monastery of S. Clare in order to hear her speak upon heavenly and divine things; for he knew her to be a chosen sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. They both conversed together for a long time upon the salvation of souls and the glory of God. Meanwhile S. Clare had ordered the bread to be placed on the table for the Sisters, desiring to have the loaves blessed by the Vicar of Christ. Having therefore finished their spiritual discourse, S. Clare, kneeling down in great reverence, besought the Sovereign Pontiff that he would please to bless the bread set on the table.

Clare Blesses the bread at the bidding of the Pope.

But the Pope replied: "Sister Clare, most true and faithful, it is my wish that you bless these loaves and make upon them the Sign of the Most Holy Cross of Christ, to Whom you have offered yourself wholly in constant sacrifice." But she answered: "Pardon me, most Holy Father, for I should deserve to be greatly blamed if I, that am a poor, vile woman, should presume to give this blessing in the presence of the Vicar of Christ." And the Pope said: "To the end that this may not be imputed to presumption but to the merit of obedience, I command you, by Holy obedience, that you make the Sign of the Most Holy Cross upon these loaves and bless them in the name of God." And she, as a true daughter of obedience, making the Sign of the Cross upon the loaves, blessed them with all devotion.

(1) Probably Pope Gregory IX., in 1235, when he came to Assisi to dedicate the Cathedral to S. Rufino.

The Sign of the Cross miraculously impressed upon the loaves.

And wonderful to relate, there appeared, at once, upon each of the loaves the Sign of the Cross impressed, most beautiful to see. Part of these loaves were eaten with great devotion; the others were preserved in memory of the miracle.(1) The Pope greatly wondering at the miraculous Sign of the Cross made by S. Clare, gave thanks to God, and afterwards, to the great comfort of Clare, bestowed upon her his blessing.

Other wonderful effects of the Sign of the Cross.

There dwelt, at that time, at the said Monastery, Sister Ortolana, the mother of S. Clare, and Sister Agnes, her sister, together with many other holy Nuns and spouses of Christ, all filled with the Holy Spirit; to whom S. Francis sent many sick persons to be signed by them with the Sign of the Cross, which they honored with such great devotion, that whosoever was signed, was immediately restored to health.

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(1) To commemorate the miracle, the Religious of the Monastery of S. Clare at Assisi have kept up the pious custom of baking little loaves on the Feast of S. Clare with the seal of the Saint impressed upon them. They are blessed and distributed among the faithful.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST ILLNESS OF THE HOLY VIRGIN; SHE IS VISITED BY POPE INNOCENT IV.; HER HAPPY DEATH.

FOR forty years Clare had trodden the narrow path of Holy Poverty, and was now approaching the goal of her heavenly vocation, her death being preceded by a number of various infirmities. Her bodily strength had already given way in the first years of her religious life by reason of the austerity of her penances, and her remaining years were filled up with sickness, and as in good health, she was enriched with the merit of active work, so, in ill health, she was enriched with the merit of suffering. "For power is made perfect in infirmity," [1] and how truly "power had been made perfect in infirmity" in her regard, is most evident from the fact that, during twenty-eight years of continual sickness, she never uttered the least murmur or complaint, and there proceeded from her lips nothing but holy conversation and continual acts of praise and thanksgiving to God, and although the weight of her infirmities was, at last, so great, that she seemed to hasten to her end, it, nevertheless, pleased God to put off the time of her passing away until her death could be attended with special honors on the part of the Holy See of which she was a favored daughter. For it was while the Sovereign Pontiff and his Cardinals were staying at Lyons[2] that Clare began to be oppressed more than usual by her sickness which caused the

Death preceded by a number of infirmities.

(1) II. Cor., XII., 9.

(2) Pope Innocent IV [1241-1254] left Italy in 1244 chiefly on account of the hostilities with Frederic II and went to Lyons in France, where in 1245, he convoked a General Council. Frederic II was excommunicated and deposed. He died in 1250. In 1251, Innocent left Lyons, and, after a short stay in Genoa, his native country, went to take up his seat at Perugia.

hearts of her daughters to be pierced with the sword of sorrow.

The vision of a Benedictine Nun, and its fulfillment.

About this time, a certain hand-maid of Christ, a Virgin devoted to God, of the Order of S. Benedict, living in the Monastery of San Paolo, had the following vision: It seemed to her that, along with one of the Sisters, she had gone to San Damiano to visit the Lady Clare in her sickness and found her lying in bed. While all present were awaiting her death, amidst weeping and sobbing, there suddenly appeared, at the head of the bed, a beautiful lady, saying to the sorrowing Sisters: "My daughters, do not mourn as dead one who still has to live; for she will not die, until the Lord with His disciples comes to visit her." And behold, after a while, the Roman Curia came to Perugia. Hearing that Clare's sickness was growing worse, the Lord Cardinal of Ostia[2] hastened from Perugia to visit the Spouse of Christ; for he was not only her father and protector by reason of his office, but he was also her most devoted friend and loved her with the purest affection. He greatly consoled her by administering to her Holy Communion; he, also, consoled the Sisters by administering to them wholesome exhortation. Then S. Clare besought her spiritual father and friend to have her soul and the souls of all the Poor Ladies commended to God. But above all other things, she begged of him that he would obtain from the Pope and the Cardinals the confirmation of the privilege of Poverty. This the faithful guardian of the Order both promised and likewise fulfilled.[1] A whole year passed, and the Pope, with his Cardinals, moved from Perugia to Assisi, so that the vision concerning the death of the Saint, as related above, could now be realized. For, under God, there is no man in existence to represent the person of Christ but the Sovereign Pontiff, and the Cardinals, who assist him in the temple of the Church Militant, are, was it ere, the Disciples of our Lord.

(1) Cardinal Reynold, who succeeded Innocent IV under the name of Alexander IV

MIRACULOUS MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES AT SAN DAMIANO.

(*From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

Clare consoled by a visit of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Divine Providence now hastened to fulfill its designs in regard to S. Clare. Christ hastened to call to the Palace of the heavenly King her who, for love of Him, had been a poor pilgrim and stranger on this earth. As for herself, she longed with all the intensity of her soul to be freed from the prison of this mortal body, and to gaze upon Christ, reigning in the heavenly Mansions, Whom, on earth, she, a poor little one, had followed in His Poverty. Her strength was now entirely broken, and her weakness daily increased. All these signs sufficiently proved that her passing away to the Lord was close at hand and that her entrance into a life without pain or sickness was within sight. Lord Pope Innocent IV. of holy memory, with his Cardinals, made haste, therefore, to visit the hand-maid of Christ; and since he had found her life to be above that of any woman of our times, he did not hesitate to render her death memorable by his sovereign presence. Having entered the monastery, he approached the bed of the holy Virgin Clare and offered her his hand for a kiss. She took his hand reluctantly and begged with the greatest reverence to be allowed to kiss the feet of the Holy Father. The amiable Pontiff ascended a wooden stool and having courteously extended his foot, she reverently inclined her head and impressed upon it, above and below, most fervent kisses. With an angelic countenance, she then petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff to grant her a full remission of all her sins. Who replied: "Would to God that I myself had no greater need of forgiveness," and then raised his hand to give her full absolution and impart to her the grace of a Plenary Indulgence. After that, they all withdrew; for just before she had received Holy Communion at the hands of the Minister Provincial. When the august visitors had departed, she raised her eyes towards heaven, and devoutly joined her hands upon her breast, and then said to the Sisters with many tears: "Praise the Lord with me, my daughters; for, on this day, Christ has been pleased to

grant me a great favor, which nothing in heaven or on earth can fail to compensate. Himself, the Most High God, I have received, this day, in Holy Communion; and I have been made worthy to behold His Vicar upon earth."

Grief of the Sisters, especially of S. Agnes

There stood around the bed of the holy Abbess her loving daughters who were so soon to be deprived of the presence of their loving Mother. Their hearts were pierced, through and through, with the sword of bitter anguish. The demands of neither sleep nor hunger could keep them away; but unmindful of rest or food, they found relief only in weeping day and night. Foremost amongst them was the pious Virgin Agnes who, weeping and wailing most bitterly, besought her not to depart this life without her Sister. To whom Clare made answer: "It is pleasing to God, my dearest Sister, that I should go hence. But do you cease to weep; for you shall pass to the Lord not long after I am gone, and before your death the Lord will grant you a great consolation."

Clare still lingers on in a wonderful manner.

She seemed to be in her last agony, and yet lingered on for quite a number of days, during which the faith and the devotion of the people increased day by day; and daily, likewise, was she honored by the sacred visits of Cardinals and Prelates. And this is a thing most wonderful that, although for seventeen days she could take no nourishment of any kind, she was, nevertheless, endowed by God with such strength as to exhort all who came to her to be faithful in the service of Christ. And when Friar Reginald, one day, exhorted her to patience during her long martyrdom of suffering, she fearlessly replied: "Believe me, dear Brother, ever since that day on which I received the grace of vocation from my Lord Jesus Christ, through His servant S. Francis, no suffering has ever been troublesome to me, no penance too hard, no infirmity too great."

Death approaching at last.

At length, the Lord dealt favorably with her and stood, so to speak, at the gate, ready to receive her. Clare, per-

ceiving her end approach, desired the presence of the priests and of the Friars and asked them to recite the Passion of our Lord and strengthen her soul with holy words. Seeing amongst the Brethren Friar Juniper, the renowned jester of the Lord, [1] who was wont to pour forth much spirited speech concerning God, she was filled with new joy and asked him had he anything new concerning the Lord. Who, opening his mouth, emitted such flaming sparks from the furnace of his burning soul, that the holy Virgin of God experienced great consolation. She then turned to her weeping Daughters to whom she recommended holy Poverty, and exhorted them to be ever mindful of the Divine benefits with praise and thanksgiving. Next she blessed all, both men and women, who had rendered her their kind services; and then invoked a solemn blessing upon all the Poor Ladies of her Monasteries, both present and to come.[2] As to the rest, who can relate it without tears? There stood by two of the blessed companions of S. Francis. The one was Angelo, who, himself weeping, endeavored to comfort the others in their sorrow. The other was Leo, who, in silence, kissed the couch of the dying Saint. Her daughters, weeping and wailing, follow their departing mother, of whom they shall soon be deprived and whom they shall see no more on earth. They grieve most bitterly, their whole desire being to depart with her; for now they are to be left alone in this valley of tears, no longer to be comforted by their loving mistress. They could have lacerated their bodies, if a sense of propriety had not held them back, and their sorrow became all the more passionate inasmuch as they could not give it full vent by exterior mourning. For the rule of the cloister imposed silence and the vehemence of their grief demanded sobbing and sighing. Their faces were swollen

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(1) *"Egregius joculator Domini,"* so called by reason of his witty sayings and doings, the outcome of his childlike simplicity and burning fervor in God's service.

[2] Her last Will and Blessing are given in Part II.

with tears, and yet the depths of their sorrow-stricken hearts still caused the tears to flow afresh.

Apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a number of Holy Virgins.

Turning to herself, the holy Virgin addressed her own soul, saying: "Go forth in peace. For thou shalt have good company on thy journey. Go forth. For He Who created thee, hath sanctified thee, and, protecting thee always, He hath loved thee with a tender love, even as a mother doth her child. Blessed be Thou, Lord God, Who hast created me!" When one of the sisters asked her to whom was she speaking, she replied: "I am speaking to my own happy soul." And that company of which she spoke was not far distant. For, turning to one of her daughters, she said: "Do you not see the King of Glory, Whom I behold?" and the hand of the Lord was upon another Sister, who with her bodily eyes beheld a most glorious vision. Being plunged into the depth of sorrow, she happened to raise her eyes towards the entrance of the house. And lo! there entered a procession of Virgins, all clad in white robes and wearing golden crowns upon their heads. But there walked one amongst them far more beautiful than all the rest; from whose crown, which was wrought far more elaborately than those of the others, there shone forth such splendor as to change—within the house—night itself into broad daylight. She advanced to the bed where the Spouse of her Divine Son lay, and, inclining towards her most lovingly, clasped her in sweetest embrace. The holy Virgins then produced a mantle of wondrous beauty; and all attending to their work with great eagerness, Clare was clothed in this new garment, and the room was most beautifully adorned.

A most blissful death.

On the following day the feast of Blessed Laurence, the most holy soul of the Mother passed away to be crowned with immortal glory. The temple of her body being dissolved, her spirit happily soared above the stars. O blessed departure from this vale of misery which for her became the

entrance into a life of everlasting happiness. For her poor fare on this earth, she now rejoices to sit down at table with the heavenly citizens. For doing penance in sack-cloth and ashes, she now sits enthroned in the heavenly Kingdom adorned with the robe of immortal glory.

CHAPTER VII.

S. Clare's Honorable Funeral Rites; Miracles after Death; Her Solemn Canonization.

Concourse of the people.

THE sad news of the death of the holy Virgin Clare caused quite a universal commotion amongst the entire population of the city. Both men and women came running to the monastery, and there was such a concourse of people that the city was nigh emptied of its inhabitants. All proclaimed her a saint, one who was dear to God, and while all praised her, there were not a few who broke forth into tears. Then came the Podesta of the city, with a company of soldiers and a body of armed men, and on that evening and during the whole of the night they kept diligent guard lest anything should happen to the precious treasure that lay in their midst.

The funeral rites presided over by the Pope.

The following day the whole Roman Court was in motion. Christ's Vicar and His Cardinals came to San Damiano and the whole city accompanied them. The Divine Office was to be recited and the Friars were about to commence the Office of the Dead, when the Lord Pope took the word, saying they should chant the Office of Virgins and not the Office of the Dead, as though he wanted to canonize her even before her body had been consigned to burial. And it was only upon the representation of the Lord Cardinal of Ostia, who advised to let things take their natural course, that the Office and Mass of the Dead were celebrated. Then the Sovereign Pontiff, and the Cardinals, and the body of

other Ecclesiastical Prelates sat down, and the same Bishop of Ostia preached the oration, taking for his text the words of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of Vanities; and all is vanity," (1) eulogizing the Virgin Clare by a most splendid discourse, for having, in a most extraordinary manner, despised the vanities of this world. The priests and Cardinals then placed themselves around the sacred remains and completed the usual funeral rites.

The body deposited in the Church of S. George

Finally, deeming it neither safe nor becoming to leave such a costly treasure at such a distance from the city, the body was raised up and carried with due honors to the Church of S. George amidst the chanting of hymns and canticles and the universal applause and rejoicing of the vast multitudes. That was, likewise, the same spot where the body of S. Francis had first been deposited; so that he who had prepared for her, while living, the way of life, should also by a sort of prophetic act prepare a place for her after death. Henceforth people came in crowds to the tomb of the holy Virgin, saying: "She surely was a Saint. She surely now reigns in glory with the Angels, since, on earth, such honors have been shown her by men. Do thou intercede for us with Christ; thou who art the first fruits of the Poor Ladies; thou who hast led many to penance and to life everlasting.

Agnes follows her sister to the heavenly reward,

Not long afterwards, Agnes was called to the heavenly nuptials(2) and thus followed her sister Clare to the eternal joys where now the two Daughters of Zion con-jointly praise God for evermore. For as they were truly sisters by nature as well as by grace, so now they are sisters, likewise, in the glory of heaven. And truly she received that consolation promised her by Clare before her death. For, as she had not been long in following the example of her sister by leaving the world and embracing the cross of Christ, so now also,

(1) Ch. I., 2.

(2) S. Clare died August 10th, 1253; her sister S. Agnes died November 16th of the same year.

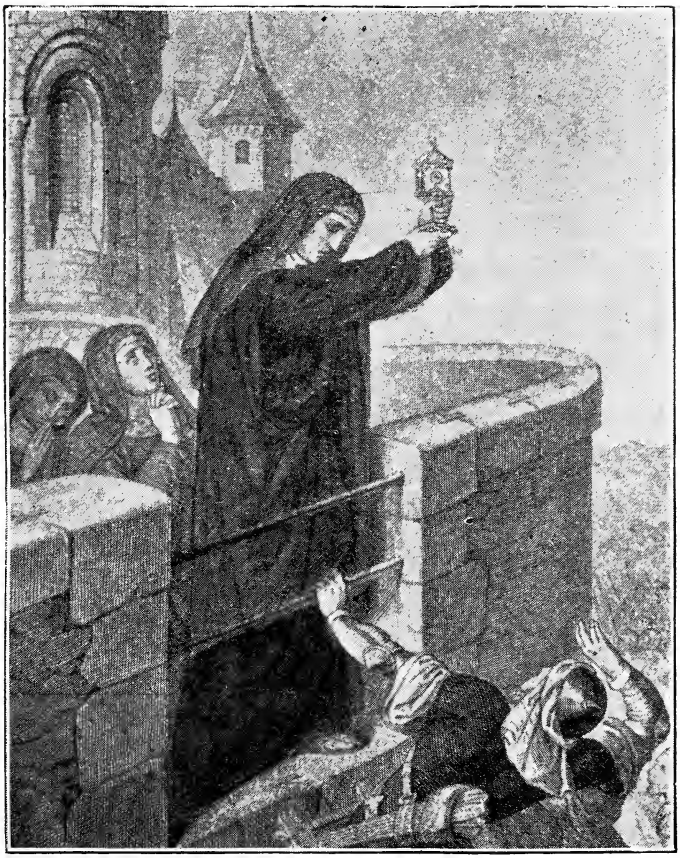
when Clare already commenced to shine with signs and miracles, she, likewise, followed her shortly in leaving this perishable world and taking her flight to heaven. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Miracles attest Clare's sancity.

The true test of sanctity does not so much consist in wonderful signs and miracles as in holiness of life and fulness of good works. John the Baptist performed no miracles. Yet greater sanctity than his never has been, nor will be, found even in those who have performed miracles. Hence the mere setting forth of the high perfection of the holy Virgin Clare would be a sufficient proof of the holiness of her life, unless otherwise demanded at times, partly through want of fervor, partly also on account of the devotion of the faithful. Clare shone with merits and miracles during her life; and now, being raised up on high, in everlasting glory, she will continue to shine with miracles throughout the entire world. There is a vast number of miracles, the truth of which has been attested by oath. Yet their very multitude compels me to make a brief selection.

A boy delivered from diabolical possession.

Giacobino, a boy of Perugia, was afflicted with a strange malady which had all the appearance of a diabolical possession. At one time, he would throw himself desperately into the fire. At other times, he would fall violently to the ground so as to fracture his teeth. He would crunch stones, lacerate his head most pitifully. and cover his whole body with blood. His mouth was distorted, his tongue protruded at a great length, his whole body was rolled up in a ball so that his legs hung over his shoulders. These fearful attacks would seize his body twice each day. Two persons were not strong enough to prevent him from stripping off his clothing. The aid of most skilled physicians was employed, but not one knew what remedy to prescribe. Guidolotto, his father, finding no help for his unfortunate boy among men,



S. Clare Repels the Attack of the Saracens.

(*From a modern engraving.*)

turned to the merits of S. Clare and prayed to her thus: "O most holy Virgin Clare, venerated by all the world, behold, I now dedicate to thee my poor miserable son, and implore thee, with all supplication, to obtain for him complete restoration to health." Full of confidence, he hastened to her sepulchre, and and placed the boy upon the tomb of the holy Virgin and he, forthwith, obtained the help for which he had been asking. For the boy was immediately freed from that infirmity and was never after troubled by any similar attacks.

Two more cases of diabolical possessions.

Alessandrina of Frutta, in the diocese of Perugia, had been tormented by an evil spirit. The demon had such power over her as to cause her to throw herself down from a very high cliff that rose up from the bank of a river and fly through the air like a bird, and then descend to the ground by a most slender branch of a tree overhanging the river Tiber, and after this manner disport herself at leisure. She had, likewise, lost the use of her left side, and one of her hands also was contracted. She tried a number of remedies, yet without success. She came to the tomb of the Virgin Clare with a contrite heart, and having invoked her merits, her threefold complaint was at once removed by the application of this single remedy. She could once more use her hand freely, her left side was restored to perfect health, and the evil spirit was compelled to depart from her. There was another woman of the same place, who was, likewise, tormented by an evil spirit and afflicted with grevious pains. She came to the tomb of the Saint at the same time and was also perfectly healed.

A youth freed from madness.

There was a French youth who at one time had been attached to the royal court of France. He was suddenly attacked with raving madness, which made him lose the power of speech and caused his body to be fearfully restless. No person was able to hold him down; but he would always succeed in breaking loose from the hands of those who

attempted to keep him down. Yet finally they succeeded in getting hold of him; they tied him down with strong ropes to a dead-bier; and he was thus carried by his country-men, much against his own will, to the Church of S. Clare where they placed him close to the tomb; and he was immediately delivered from his terrible affliction through the faith of those who had taken him to the tomb.

A man healed of the following sickness.

Valentino, a young man from Spello, was dreadfully afflicted with the falling sickness, so that he would fall to the ground anywhere about six times each day. One of his legs was, moreover, so contracted as to be entirely useless. He was placed upon an ass and brought to the sepulchre of S. Clare. Here he remained for two days and three nights. On the third day a crackling sound was heard in his leg as if a piece of wood had been snapped in two. He instantly arose and was healed of both infirmities.

A blind man restored to sight.

Giacobello, the son of a poor woman from Spoleto, had been struck with blindness for twelve years, so that he was always obliged to have a guide; and without a guide he could go nowhere. Once, being left for a while by the boy who acted as guide, he fell down a precipice, fractured his arm and severely bruised his head. One night, as he lay asleep near the bridge of Narni, he saw in his dream a lady who said to him: "Why do you not come to me at Assisi to be delivered from your afflictions?" When he arose in the morning, he related the vision with great fear to two other blind men in whose company he was. They answered him: "We have heard that quite recently a lady died in the city of Assisi whose sepulchre the hand of the Lord is said to have honored with the gift of healing and many miracles." Having heard this, he promptly set out on the road and hastened along with great speed. The following night, he stayed at Spello, where he had the same vision. His speed now increased; so great was his desire of receiving back his sight. When he came to Assisi, he found such crowds had assembled

that it was impossible for him even to enter and get near the tomb; and placing a stone under his head, he fell asleep at the entrance. His faith was great, and he was sorely grieved at being unable to gain admittance. And behold! while he was asleep the voice spoke to him a third time: "The Lord will deal favorably with you, Giacobello, if you will but enter." As soon as he awoke, he begged the crowd with tears, crying out aloud, and redoubling his request, that for the love of God, they would be pleased to let him enter. They made way for him, and he reached the tomb. He at once took off his shoes and outer garments, placed the thongs of his shoes around his neck, and, in this manner, humbly crouching up against the tomb, he fell into a slight slumber. Again S. Clare appeared to him, saying: "Arise! for you have been delivered." He rose up at once; his blindness, had wholly disappeared, and the light of his eyes had returned. Once more he could see clearly and distinctly. Full of joy at the recovery of his sight, he praised and glorified God and invited all men to join him in blessing God for the great wonder He had wrought on his behalf through the merits of Clare.

A man recovers the use of his right hand.

Buon Giovanni, a man of Perugia, had marched forth with his fellow-citizens against Foligno, with which city they were at war. In the skirmishes which followed, his right hand was completely crushed by the fall of a heavy stone. He spent large sums of money upon physicians to recover the use of his hand. But all the remedies, he employed, had not the slightest effect. His hand remained useless and incapable to perform the least work. Finding that it was impossible ever to recover the use of his hand, he thought several times to have it amputated. But hearing of the wonderful things which God was pleased to perform through his holy handmaid, the Virgin Clare, he made a vow and hastened to her tomb. Here he made an offering of a waxen image of a hand and prostrated himself at the tomb; and, at

once, even before he left the Church, his hand was perfectly restored to its former healthy condition.

A boy, wasted away with sickness, restored to health and strength.

A certain boy from Castel Bettona, who had been ill three years, had been gradually wasting away so that he was almost reduced to a bare skeleton. The violence of the disease had deprived his legs of all strength, so that he was obliged to stoop, and was always bent to the ground and could hardly move along even with the aid of a stick. His father employed a number of physicians, especially of such as were skilled in healing bone diseases. He was prepared to spend his entire fortune if he could only have his boy restored to health. Being told by everybody that his boy was incurable, he bethought himself of the new Saint, of whose wonders he had heard so much. The boy was carried to the spot where the precious remains of the holy Virgin rested, and he had not been lying near the tomb long before he obtained the grace of perfect health. He forthwith arose, erect and sound, walking and leaping, and praising God, and inviting the people that were gathering around, to sing the praises of the holy Virgin Clare.

Two children doomed to be cripples all their life, made sound and whole.

There was a boy of ten years from San Guirizzo, a village in the diocese of Assisi, who had been a cripple from his birth. His shin bones were diseased, his feet stood out transversely, so that he walked crosswise, and when he fell, he was hardly able to rise again. His mother had several times recommended him to the intercession of S. Francis, yet without obtaining help. But hearing that S. Clare was shining forth with new miracles, she carried the boy to her sepulchre. After a few days his shin-bones were made sound and whole, his limbs became straight, and that which the Blessed Francis, though implored with many prayers, did not grant, his daughter, S. Clare, was pleased to confer by the power of God.

Giocomo di Franco, an inhabitant of Gubbio, had a boy five years old, who, by reason of weakness in his feet, had never yet walked a step, nay, was incapable of doing so.

S. Francis and S. Clare in Ecstacy at Our Lady of the Angels.

(*From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

He looked upon the poor child as a monster and a disgrace to his family. The child slept upon the ground, and rolled about the floor in dirt and ashes. He sometimes would seize hold of a bench in order to raise himself up, but could not stand on his feet. Nature had given him the instinct to walk, but refused him the strength. His parents recommended him to the merits of S. Clare, and vowed, that, if through her intercession, he would obtain perfect health, he should ever after be known under the appellation of "Servant of S. Clare." The vow had scarce been uttered, when the Virgin of Christ healed her servant by obtaining for him the power to walk. His parents hastened at once with the child to the tomb of the holy Virgin, where they offered him to God, the boy, meanwhile, leaping about with joy.

A woman healed of spinal weakness.

Plenaria, a woman of Castel Menavio, had been suffering for a long time from great weakness in her back, so that she could not walk except with the aid of a stick; and even the use of the stick did not permit her to walk erect, but merely enabled her to drag herself along in a shuffling manner. Upon a certain Friday she caused herself to be carried to the tomb of S. Clare. Here she poured forth most devout prayers, and she shortly obtained what she had asked with so much fervor, for the very next day she found herself entirely restored to health; and she who had been carried to the tomb by others, returned home, walking upon her feet.

A girl delivered from tumors in her throat.

A girl from Perugia was, for a long time, afflicted with tumors in her throat, which caused her intense pain. Not less than twenty lumps could be counted in her throat, and the throat itself had become as hard as a stone. She was several times taken by her mother to the tomb of S. Clare to implore with all devotion, the aid of the Saint. Once, they spent a whole night in the church. The girl lay near the tomb, where, upon a sudden, she fell into a heavy perspiration, the lumps softened and began to disappear little by little, so that after a time, not a sign of them remained.

A Sister delivered from a similar evil during the life-time of the Saint.

Andrea, one of the Sisters, was suffering from a similar complaint, while S. Clare was still alive. It must be noticed, strange as it may appear, that this Sister, though being in the midst of such fervent religious, was exceedingly lukewarm. Living among the prudent Virgins she seemed to belong to the number of the foolish. Upon a certain night, she commenced to squeeze her throat with her hands almost to suffocation, in order to break the tumor and free herself of the disease by main force, relying upon her own strength independently of the will of God. Clare knew of the occurrence at once by Divine inspiration. She immediately called one of the Sisters and said to her: "Make haste, and run down stairs; boil an egg and give it to Sister Andrea of Ferrara, and then bring her up to me." She obeyed, and found the said Sister Andrea in a critical condition. She had quite lost the use of speech, and was almost on the point of being suffocated by reason of the violent efforts she had made of getting rid of her malady. The Sister did all she could for her, and then brought her to the Mother Abbess, who said to her: "Poor wretch. Why hide your thoughts from the Lord, since even to me they are well known? Yet behold the evil which you attempted to remove of your own strength, the Lord Jesus will heal for you. But take a warning, and change your life for the better. For an infirmity, different from what you suffer now, will attack you; and from that infirmity you will not arise again." At these words sorrow entered her heart, and she changed her life, to the admiration of all. She was healed of her present infirmity, but not long after, died a happy death of another malady.

A boy restored from the fangs of a wolf.

The country round about Assisi was very often infested with savage wolves who even attacked men and gorged themselves with human flesh. There was a certain woman, called Bonna, from Monte Galliano in the diocese of Assisi, who had two sons. She had scarcely finished bewailing the sad fate of one, whom the wolves carried off and devoured,

when her second boy seemed doomed to a similar fate. For while the mother was indoors, engaged in her domestic duties, her little boy had strayed away from the house, when suddenly a wolf seized him by the neck and carried him off into the wood. Some men who were engaged in the vineyards close by, hearing the screams of the boy, ran to the mother, saying: "See whether your little boy is missing; for we have heard some fearful yells." The mother knew at once it was her own little one who had been carried away by a wolf, and thereupon raised her lamentations, and filling the air with her cries, she called upon the holy Virgin Clare, saying: "Give me back my poor boy, O holy and glorious S. Clare! Give back the little one to its poor mother, or else I shall go mad and kill myself." And running with her neighbors after the wolf, they found the little boy in the wood lying on the ground. The wolf had left him, and a dog was licking his wounds. The ferocious beast had first of all fixed his fangs upon the neck of the child and then upon his sides in order to be able to carry him easier, and, in both places, had left no slight marks of the attack. Yet the woman's prayer had been heard; and together with her neighbors she hastened to the tomb of her deliverer; and exhibiting the wounds and bruises of her little boy to all who wished to see them she returned copious thanks to God and S. Clare.

A girl delivered from a similar attack

There was a little girl from Castel Canara, sitting in a field in the broad daylight. A woman lay close by asleep. All at once, a wolf—a man-eater—came prowling along on the look out for prey. The little girl saw him; but believing him to be a dog, showed no signs of fear, and even commenced to play with him and pull him by the hair. Upon this, the brute turned savage and, seizing the child's head in his fangs, made off with her towards the woods. The woman, roused by the noise, was thunderstruck, percieving at a glance what had happened. She at once bethought her-

self of S. Clare, and, raising her voice, she called out: "Help, help, dear Saint! Behold this poor child! At this moment I commend her to thy protection." And strange to say, the child who was being carried off by the wolf, inveighed against the beast and said: "Thou thief! How darest thou carry me any further, hearing that I have been commended to so great a Virgin!" The wolf, as though put to shame by these words, immediately placed the child upon the ground very gently and then ran off with great speed like a thief caught in the act.

Solemn Canonization.

The fame of these miracles soon noised abroad, and the virtues of the holy Virgin Clare became, each day, more widely known and praised, so that the whole Catholic world, with great expectation and desire, looked forward to the speedy canonization of one so holy and powerful. There sat, at that time, in the chair of Blessed Peter, the Most Clement Prince, our Most Holy Lord, Alexander IV., a man who was a true lover of all holiness and who, in a special manner was the staunch friend of Religious and the firm upholder of Religious Orders. This Pontiff, moved by the vast number of such great signs and wonders as by a thing most extraordinary, began to treat with his Cardinals concerning her canonization. A commission consisting of celebrated and discreet men was at once inaugurated in order to examine into the miracles wrought through Clare's intercession and to discuss the wonderful deeds of her holy life. It was proved by them that, while living, Clare was a most resplendent example of every virtue; it was, likewise, proved that, after her death she became admirable for genuine miracles, duly examined into, and attested upon oath. On the appointed day, in the presence of the Sacred College of Cardinals, a great number of Bishops and Archbishops, a vast assembly of priests and Religious and an immense gathering of learned and eminent men, the Sovereign Pontiff placed the whole matter before them, and asked the assembled prelates

S. Clare Blesses the Loaves at the Command of Pope Innocent IV.

(*From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

to give their opinion. They all agreed most readily with prompt acclamation, and declared that Clare merited to be glorified on earth, since God had glorified her on high. Thus it came to pass that two years after her death and on the anniversary of her departure from this life, Blessed Alexander, to whom this special grace had been reserved, convoked a large assembly of priests and prelates, in whose presence he, with the utmost solemnity and after appropriate address, inscribed the Virgin Clare, with great reverence, in the calendar of the Saints and ordered her feast-day to be duly observed throughout the whole Church, which he himself first most solemnly observed along with his court. [1]

This took place in the principal church at Anagni, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation one thousand two hundred and fifty-five, and the first year of the Pontificate of our Most Holy Lord Alexander; to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

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[1] For the official documents and other important particulars concerning Clare's canonization, see Part II.

PART SECOND.

I.

Clare at Home.

1. *WHAT MADE ASSISI FAMOUS.*

RIGHT in the heart of Italy, there lies, as a veritable Eden, the magnificent valley of Umbria. It is guarded, at either entrance, by a well-fortified place, as by a faithful sentinel, Foligno to the South, and Perugia to the North. Half-way between them stands the city of Assisi. It commands a most picturesque position. Like an eagle's nest it is perched on the flank of Mount Subasio, one of the mountains which form the basis of the lofty Appenines, the blue outlines of which may be traced on the far horizon.

Assisi famous not merely by reason of the beauty of its site.

But it is not the scenery of the place which concerns us here. That which has immortalized Assisi, and made it famous throughout the world, is the fact of its being the birth-place of Francis and Clare, two of the most illustrious heroes of the church, the gentle, yet powerful, influence of whose beautiful lives wrought such wonders in their day, and even now still sways the minds and hearts of thousands. At Assisi their presence is felt as though they were still living in the place. The whole city is redolent with the fragrance

Assisi famous chiefly for being the birth-place of Francis and Clare.

of their holy memory. Wherever you turn, whether in the plains below or the hills above, or the city itself, you will meet with some monument or other, which will vividly bring before your mind scenes and events, centuries old, as though they were of yesterday. Down in the plain, you see a splendid Basilica, under the lofty dome of which stands the ancient little Sanctuary of Portiuncula, or of Our Lady of the Angels, the cradle of the Franciscan Order. As you approach the city, you have, on your left, the Sagro Convento, or Convent of the Friars, together with the triple Basilica of the Holy Patriarch, reared by the piety of the Faithful, to enshrine the tomb of S. Francis; while on your right, at the other end of the city, you have the Church of Santa Chiara, which holds the sacred remains of the Holy Virgin S. Clare. Upon ascending the mountain-side, you come to the Carceri, or Convent of Prison-cells, partly consisting of narrow grottos hollowed out by nature in the rock overhanging a deep ravine. It was here S. Francis lived for a time with some of his first disciples, and it is still inhabited by some Friars at the present day. Returning to the city and passing out by the Porta Nuova, you shortly come to the ancient little church and monastery of San Damiano, the the scene of Clare's holy life and death, and mother-house of the Order of Poor Ladies. The place is still as it used to be in the days of S. Clare. In the Refectory, there are still the same tables and seats, and, in the Choir, the same stalls used by the sisters in her time. The Poor Clares, however, have left and moved inside the city to watch and pray over the tomb of their Holy Mother. San Damiano is now inhabited by a community of Franciscan Friars.

Want of space forbids even to mention the numerous sanctuaries and monuments of which Assisi boasts in connection with the lives of S. Francis and of S. Clare. It is their memory then which renders Assisi so famous, and which makes it at the present day a noted halting place of

the modern tourist, just as it used to be a celebrated resort of piety and devotion for the pilgrim with staff and wallet of by-gone days.

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2. *SOME FACTS CONCERNING CLARE'S ANCESTRY.*

The ancient biography strangely silent as to Clare's ancestry.

Owing to what may be termed the pious indifference of our ancient biographers, we are left almost entirely in the dark as to the family-connections of S. Clare. He tells us nothing beyond the mere fact that her father, whose name is not even mentioned, was a noble knight, and that her mother, Ortolana by name, was, likewise, of a noble family.

Clare by birth a Princess of the noble house of the Counts of Scefi.

The scanty information that can be gathered from other sources amounts to this: Clare was a descendant, on her father's side, of the ancient house of the Counts of Scefi, in the city of Assisi. Her great grandfather was called Paolo Scefi. Paolo had an only son, by name of Bernardutio. This Bernardutio had three sons: Paolo, Monaldo, and Favorino, the father of our Saint. These three brothers are designated in a special manner as noble knights possessed of great wealth, and famous for their prowess and bravery in war. Her uncle Paolo had two children, Bernardutio, the father of Rufino, one of the first companions of S. Francis; and Agnes, who afterwards joined Clare at San Damiano. It was through Rufino that Francis was introduced into Clare's family. Clare had two sisters, younger than herself, Agnes and Beatrice, both of whom followed her to the cloister. Her own mother, Ortolana, joined her after the death of Count Favorino. Two other children had been born long before S. Clare. There names were Bosone and Penenda. Bosone, the first-born and heir of the family, probably died at an early age. Penenda married when quite young and had a number of children. Three of her daughters: Amata, Balbina and Agnes joined S. Clare. A niece

of hers, called Clare, is also mentioned to have entered the monastery of San Damiano. It is most probable that Ortolana remained childless after the birth of Penenda, and that she undertook those pious pilgrimages, spoken of in the biography, in order to obtain an heir for the noble house.

Sasso Rosso Clare's ancestral place

The ancestral place of the Scefi family was Sasso Rosso, or Red Rock, so called from the reddish color of the rock, of Mount Subasio. It formed a citadel, or fortified castle, and was, likewise a seignery, or lordship, with an extensive domain. It stood on an eminence, on the south-side of Mount Subasio, not far from the city of Assisi. Its imposing ruins may be seen at the present day. The Scefi family also owned a palatial residence within the city of Assisi. The gateway of the palace, with the family arms sculptured upon it, still remains and is situated not far from the monastery of the Poor Clares.

Little known about Ortolana's family

As to Ortolana, nothing is known beyond the bare fact that she belonged to the noble family of the Fiumi in Assisi. Descendants of this ancient family are said to be still in existence. Her proper appellation was Countess of Sterpeto. But what is the glory arising from an illustrious family compared to the glory that surrounds Ortolana's name for being the mother of S. Clare, who, by her personal merits and by her holy Order, has become illustrious throughout the entire world; for nobility of birth is nothing without the nobility of soul; and holiness of life alone constitutes true nobility of character.

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3. *INFLUENCE OF CLARE'S HOME-SURROUNDINGS UPON THE FORMATION OF HER CHARACTER.*

A child's character greatly depends upon its home surroundings.

Clare's natural endowments and the gradual unfolding of her character are again things concerning which our biographer gives us no information. We are left to personal

conjecture, from the meagre account we find in the biography. Very little is also said about the character of Count Favorino and the Countess Ortolana. Yet an attempt may be made to picture to ourselves what Clare's parents may likely have been, as this will give a good insight into Clare's own character. For a child's physical and moral constitution, and general developement of its character, depend in a great measure upon its home-surroundings, and especially the character of its parents and others with whom it is intimately associated.

Count Favorino a man of the world.

Count Favorino was evidently a man of a proud and haughty disposition, and given to a violent temper when thwarted in his purpose. He was a man of the world, judging and acting according to the dictates of worldly wisdom and prudence. To uphold the ancestrial glory of his ancient home, was foremost in his mind. He, therefore, naturally desired nothing more earnestly than to see Clare contract a suitable alliance by marriage. No wonder then that he was almost beside himself with rage and fury when he heard of Clare's flight and the strange mode of life she had embraced. No wonder that his anger became still more violent, when, a few days after Clare's disappearance another daughter, Agnes by name, followed her sister's example. Had they embraced some venerable time-honored Religious Institute, he would perhaps not have shown so much resentment. But to see two of his daughters, the pride of his heart, and the hope of his old age, walk in the footsteps of a man whom his own father had cast out and disinherited, and upon whom many of the citizens of Assisi looked down as a madman and dreamy visionary; to see two of his own children degrade themselves to the lowest depth of beggery and pauperism; to hear his honorable name scorned and derided; to become the laughing-stock of his friends: this was, certainly too much for his noble pride and worldly ambition. Yet, we must not be too severe with him. He

acted as he thought best. His conscience was erroneous. But it is not our place to judge in how far he was guilty. He erred in not viewing things in the eyes of a Christian parent, whose chief duty it is to secure the eternal welfare of his children. He lost sight of the fact that God, the heavenly Father, has a primary right to the love and service of the children of earthly parents. At the moment, he allowed himself to be carried away by his blind passion, and hence knew no better. That afterwards Favorino saw the error he had committed and became perfectly reconciled with the new mode of life chosen by his daughters, is attested by numerous writers. They tell us that he endeavored to make atonement by an humble and penitent life ,that he, too became a disciple of S. Francis, by joining the third Order, and that he died a holy and edifying death.

Countess Ortolana, a devoted wife and mother, yet not entirely free from the spirit of the world.

Ortolana was certainly of a milder and gentler disposition than her husband. Her charity and piety, and devotion to her domestic duties, are sufficiently described in the biography. She must have been the model of a true housewife and conscientious mother. Yet she, too, seems to have been somewhat imbued with the spirit of the age, or else was too much under the sway of her husband; for we find that she shared in the views and aspirations of the Count concerning the future of Clare. That her daughter's sudden and mysterious disappearance was for her a peculiar trial, is quite certain; and that she must have felt it even more keenly than her husband, is equally certain. Had not her mother's loving and affectionate heart been deeply cut and wounded? Had she not been singularly slighted and neglected by not being honored with the full confidence of her daughter's thoughts and aspirations? Surely, she had not deserved such treatment. Had she not been the first to sow the good seed of piety and virtue in the tender heart of her daughter? Had she not watched over her with the utmost care and jealousy! And did she not rejoice at seeing her efforts so

CARDINAL RAYNALD ADMINISTERS THE HOLY VIATICUM TO S. CLARE.

(*From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.*)

well rewarded? For was not Clare, owing to her mother's careful training, a most dutiful and virtuous child? And to be set aside by such a daughter, this caused her heart a greater pang than the disappointment and humiliation accompanying the step taken by Clare. Still, her deep-rooted Christian faith soon enabled her to perceive in all this the finger of God, and hence she humbly bowed to His Divine Will. She had ever firmly believed that Clare was destined by heaven to become a great shining light. As an over-fond mother, she had, hitherto, indulged in ideas of human fame and glory, but now she understood the true significance of that mysterious prophesy. Hence she made a willing sacrifice of her aching heart, and blessed God for what He had done. And as soon as she herself was free from all earthly ties, by the death of her husband, she hastened to place herself under the spiritual guidance of her daughter.

Buona Guelfuccio, Clare's most intimate friend and counsellor.

There is another personage, not to be overlooked, when speaking of the early bringing up of Clare. It is her aunt, Buona Guelfuccio, a pious widow, residing in the Scefi family, and, no doubt, assisting Ortolana in the education of her children. In fact, she seems to have acted the part of a governess, so that, although Ortolana considered it her personal duty to teach her children their prayers and the rudiments of faith, the rest of the training would naturally fall to the share of Buona. Now whether it was that Buona was thus brought into closer contact with the child, or whether she was gifted with keener insight into things, the fact is, that she soon came to know the true character of Clare; and Clare on the other hand, finding that her feelings and aspirations were understood and appreciated, placed unbounded confidence in her aunt, laid open to her the innermost thoughts and desires of her beautiful soul, and received from her all possible encouragement and assistance.

As to Clare herself, it is plain that she was no ordinary child. Both nature and grace combined in endowing her with

the choicest gift; and her domestic surroundings favored her in every way so that she "advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace, with God and with men." [1]

Her father's character seems to have exercised little or no influence upon the child. She evidently saw him but seldom, as duty called him away frequently. And even when he was at home, she would not be brought into very close contact with him. Neither would he seriously trouble himself about her. To him, she was, at first, nothing more than a winsome child, full of bright prospects for a happy future; and she would, no doubt, delight him, as she did everyone else, with her innocent ways and affectionate caresses. Beyond that, he noticed nothing. But if Clare did inherit anything from her father, it was that nobleness of spirit and fixity of purpose which characterized her so thoroughly later on.

It was to her mother that Clare owed most next to God. For she it was who had instructed her in the ways of God and the paths of virtue, not merely by precept, but chiefly by her own beautiful example, so that, naturally, the mother's loving, gentle, and pious character, impressed itself deeply upon the child and largely contributed to fashion and mold her character. Blessed the child who is favored with a pious and devoted mother. The mother's efforts were seconded by the faithtul Buona, who become even more than a mother to her.

What wonder, then, if, under such genial influence, the abundance of Divine grace, with which the Holy Ghost had endowed her from the beginning, soon manifested itself in a remarkable manner, and opened out to full view the loveliness and perfection of her innermost soul. What wonder, then, if we perceive in her, even at an early age, that deep piety and devotion, that strong love of God and desire after heavenly things, that tender love for the poor and afflicted,

(1) Luke II, 52.

and a thousand acts of virtue beyond her years, and, especially, that singular trait of prudence and seriousness which made her forego childish play and turn her thoughts to more serious things, and which afterwards filled her with that marked contempt for the frivolous pursuits of the world! These things must, undoubtedly, have strongly impressed, and, at times, even puzzled the minds of her friends and caused them to exclaim: "What manner of child is this!"

Clare fully resolved to consecrate herself to God, though outward circumstances do not seem to favor her design.

Time, meanwhile, advanced; and Clare ceased to be a child. She was evidently possessed of rare personal beauty, for, at the age of twelve, she was already sought after in marriage by princely suitors; and her parents did not fail to use all their influence and persuasion in order to induce her to make her choice and bestow her hand upon some worthy cavalier. Yet her heart was far removed from any such idea. Long ago she had already understood the right value of things, and she longed for nothing but to consecrate her whole being to God. Yet she wisely kept her thoughts and desires from the knowledge of her parents, and even yielded to their wishes as far as she could. Hence she would take her place in society, dress in costly and splendid attire, take part in social festivities, and make herself amiable and agreeable to all. It was only when the question of marriage was again urged upon her that she would excuse herself under various pretexts, yet always in such a manner as not to wound the feelings of her parents, while they, on their part, thinking she acted through maidenly reserve, would, for the time being, press the matter no further. Internally, however, she was fully resolved to give herself to God, leaving it to Him to enable her to carry out her design.

4. *BY WHAT AUTHORITY DID FRANCIS ACT IN THE PART HE TOOK IN CLARE'S VOCATION?*

Francis' own character, a sufficient guarantee that he did not act on his own authority.

The biographer leaves us under the impression that Francis acted entirely on his own authority when he advised Clare to leave her home by stealth in the middle of the night and enter upon that new, strange mode of life. But is this really so? Anyone who is acquainted with the character of S. Francis, will say at once, that this could not be the case. Francis was especially remarkable for his singular loyalty and submission to the Divine authority of the Church. This, in itself, is a sufficient proof that he would never have countenanced, and still less advised, such an important step as that taken by Clare, without due ecclesiastical sanction and approval.

Submission to the Church, a sure test of being guided by the spirit of God

It need not be urged as a plea for an excuse that both Francis and Clare were in a special manner guided by the Holy Ghost, Whose voice must be heard and obeyed. There is no doubt that both were chosen souls of the Divine Spirit. It is, likewise, true that the Divine Inspirations of the Holy Ghost must be heeded, especially in matters relating to the choice of a vocation. But how can anyone be certain that it is the Holy Ghost who is speaking to him, since even the devil himself transforms himself into an angel of light and suggests the most plausible things? Will it be safe to rely upon one's own judgment? But in that case, one would be merely following his own ideas. Some outward authority is needed to guide us aright so that we may be positive that we are hearing God's voice and doing His will. Such authority is to be found nowhere except in the Catholic Church, which, for that very reason, is animated and guided by the Holy Ghost. Hence, absolute submission to the Divine authority of the Catholic Church is a sure test of being

FUNERAL PROCESSION OF S. CLARE.

(From an engraving by Adrian Collaert, 1609.)

guided by the Spirit of God. This truth was thoroughly well understood and practiced by S. Francis.

Francis' personal example is another argument in his favor. Concerning his own vocation, he found in the Bishop of Assisi a most faithful counsellor and devoted friend. It was in his presence that he made a total renunciation of all his earthly goods, giving back to his father the very clothes he wore; and it was from his hands that he humbly accepted as an alms the peasant's garb with which he clothed himself and then entered upon the evangelical life of Holy Poverty. Would he, therefore, have acted differently in regard to Clare? It is impossible to entertain such an idea even for one moment. The Bishop, as chief pastor and adviser of the faithful of his diocese, must, therefore, have been fully aware of Clare's thoughts and aspirations and given his full sanction and approval to the entire course of proceedings.

Francis' personal example this matter.

That this really was the case, is vouched for by all subsequent writers upon this subject. They perceive an evidence of this in the strange incident which happened on that memorable Palm-Sunday in the Cathedral at Assisi. When, for some particular reason, Clare did not approach the Altar to receive the blessed Palm, the Bishop left the Sanctuary and went to the place where she knelt in prayer and placed in her hand a palm-branch, as an emblem of the victory she was to carry off that very night, encouraging her by this action not to waver but to be steadfast in her holy purpose; for victory was sure to crown her undertaking.

Historians confirm that Francis and Clare acted with the advice and approval of the Bishop of Assisi.

But must not Clare's whole conduct, if considered in itself, be condemned as something contrary to all rules of propriety and filial devotion? To see a young maiden leave her house secretly by night, and proceed to a lonely spot, situated, at that time, in a dense wood, to be received by the Friars who were awaiting her; to have her hair shorn, be robed in a coarse garment, and have her head covered with a black vail; and to be then conducted by the Friars to a

Clare's conduct, if subjected to the test of right criticism, laudable in in every respect.

monastery of Benedictine Nuns; does not all this appear, at first sight, to be rather strange, to say the least? And where was Clare's filial love and submission to the will of her parents? Did she not know that her conduct must fill the whole house with grief and consternation; that her father would rage at thus seeing himself insulted by his daughter; that her poor mother must be heart-broken at finding herself slighted and forsaken by a child for whom she had done so much? Clare must have known this. Why, then, did she act in a manner so seemingly strange and even wrongful? There is but one answer to all this, and the answer is plain. She acted as she did, because she could not do otherwise. From her earliest childhood, she was fully convinced, in her own mind, that God was calling her to leave all things, and consecrate herself wholly to His service. Then Divine Providence sent her the holy Patriarch S. Francis, in whom she, at once, recognized the spiritual guide of her conscience given her by God. The time at length approached for acting. She could remain at home no longer. She had to leave home and give up all things. Could she tell her father? How could she? She knew it would be simply useless. Could she acquaint her mother? That also would have been without avail. Must she then give up a vocation which she knew came from God? But then there sounded in her ears the words of the Divine Redeemer: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me."[1] She must obey the call of God. It was useless to consult her parents. Therefore, she must leave home secretly. This was the only plan left to be adopted. And such, precisely, was the plan suggested by S. Francis and approved by the Bishop. Yet although her departure from home was secret, it was in no wise clandestine, and cannot, therefore, be censured as unbecoming. In all her dealings with Blessed Francis, she observed most scrupulously the demands of strict decorum

[1] Matth., X, 37.

and propriety. She never left her home, as the biographer tells us, except in the company of a faithful attendant, who was no other than her own aunt Buona. Would she now act less prudently when taking the final step? Certainly not. The matter was kept from the knowledge of her parents. But that others were in the secret, and that everything had been duly prepared and arranged beforehand, is perfectly certain. In fact, the biographer tells us that Clare was personally attended by a company of young damsels, who acted as a suit of honor. It goes without saying, that Buona herself would not be absent, and it must also be admitted that quite a number of persons, both men and women, had assembled in order to witness the solemn midnight function.

II.

Clare in the Cloister.

1. CLARE'S FIRST COMPANIONS IN THE CLOISTER.

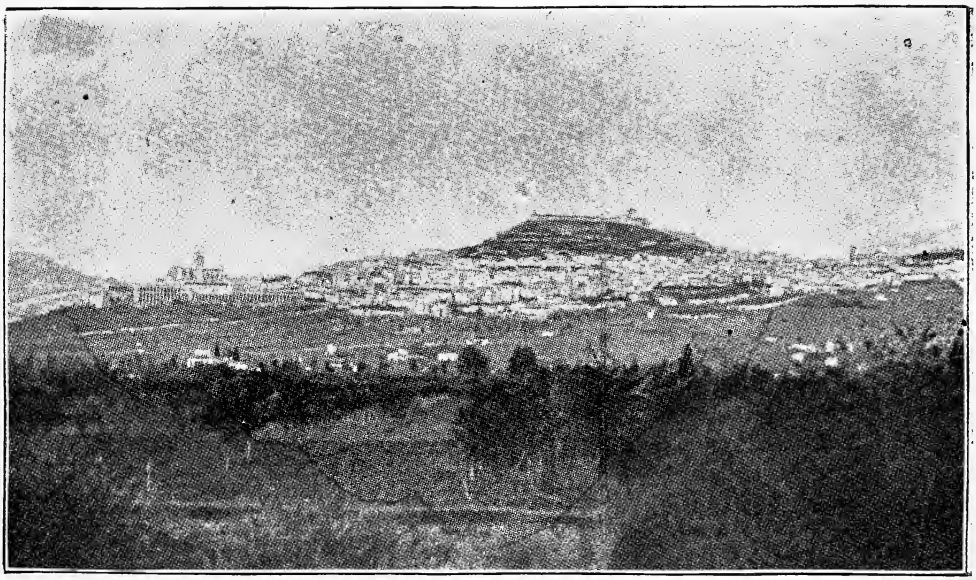
Numerous vocations to the new Order.

OUR ancient author seems to be a trifle pompous and magniloquent when speaking of the number of illustrious dames and maidens eager to be admitted into the new Order; and he again fails to give us any details on the subject. He mentions a few names. He relates the conversion of her sister Agnes. He also speaks of her mother Ortolana as having entered the monastery; and several other Sisters are mentioned by name. But even this much is done merely incidentally, not to prove the increase of the Order, but just to illustrate some particular facts with which he is dealing. Still it is undeniably true that the new Order spread with marvellous rapidity, and that amongst its members was a large number of rich and noble ladies. Many of them who joined the Order ended their peaceful days in San Damiano, while others, having been well trained and established in the Spirit of the Institute, were told off to make new foundations, or govern communities already established. But for all particulars, we have to consult subsequent authors.

Names of fifty Religious forming the community of San Damiano, in the year 1238.

Wadding, the great Franciscan historian, in his Annals, for the year 1238, refers to a document which, among other interesting items, gives us the names of fifty Sisters, who, under the government of S. Clare as Abbess, formed at that time, the community of San Damiano. These are their names:

"Clare, Abbess; Agnes, Philippa, Jacoba, Illuminata, Cecilia, Aegidia, Agnes, Anastasia, Agnes, Christina,



General View of Assisi.

(*From a Photo.*)

Jacobina, Balbina, Mansueta, Amata, Benvenuta, Bonaventura, Beneventuta, Benrecepta, Consolata, Andrea, Aurea, Leonarda, Agatha, Felicita, Angelucia, Felicita, Massariola, Maria, Gregoria, Maria, Joanna, Benedicta, Joanna, Bennata, Joanna, Lucia, Helza, Matthia, Clara, Stella, Lea, Beatrice, Bartholomea, Praxeda, Herminia, Daniella, Clarella, Pacifica, Vertera, Patricia."

Some of these were united to S. Clare by the natural bonds of relationship; others had known her before her entrance into the Monastery and had been her intimate friends and associates; all had been drawn to her by the irresistible power of her noble example. Her mother Ortolana is not mentioned on this list; she had already departed this life, and received the heavenly reward, as, no doubt, had been the happy lot of many others besides, during those twenty-six years, which elapsed since the foundation of the community.

Particular mention of a few of the early companions of S. Clare.

WHILE it is impossible to give an account of each of these devoted souls, it will, nevertheless, be interesting to speak of a few of the early companions of S. Clare.

B. Pacifica.

One of the first—if not the very first—to join S. Clare, was her aunt, Buona Guelfuccio, who, upon entering the Religious life, took the name of Pacifica.

Of the special influence she exercised upon her holy niece, and the important part she took in the foundation of the Order, we have spoken already. It is very probable that, having been so intimately associated with Clare from her childhood, she never left her side, but, at once, shared with her in the new life of poverty and penance. Having been remarkable for her holiness before, she became still more so now. God deigned to adorn her with the gift of miracles.

In 1248, she was sent by S. Clare to Spello, close to Assisi, in order to introduce the strict rule of the Order into

a Monastery already in existence. In this important mission, she succeeded admirably well. Her success was partly due to a striking miracle God was pleased to work through her intercession. The Religious suffered greatly from the want of water, and it seemed naturally impossible to remedy the evil. One day, she assembled the whole Community and along with them commenced to pray; and while they were thus engaged, all at once, a beautiful fawn was seen in the cloister, striking the ground with its feet, and immediately an abundant spring of fresh water gushed forth. It soon became known in the neighborhood as the *"Miraculous Fountain"* by reason of the many wonderful cures that were wrought by the water.

Having established the Monastery upon a solid basis, she returned to San Damiano. She survived S. Clare five years. She was one of the chief witnesses at the process of canonization of her holy niece. She died at the age of eighty. Her body was buried at San Damiano and afterwards transferred to the new Church of S. Clare in Assisi.

B. Amata.

AMATA was the niece of S. Clare, being the daughter of Don Martin di Cora and Penenda, the eldest sister of S. Clare. Though living for a time, under the same roof with Clare in her paternal home, she was far from yielding to the influence of the saintly life of her aunt. Her great beauty, coupled with wealth and nobility, caused her name to be on the lips of all. Idolized by her friends and relations, she allowed herself to be carried away by the alluring adulations of frivolous youths, so that she thought of nothing but of gaiety and fineries, and gave herself entirely to worldly pleasures and enjoyments.

At length, she consented to contract marriage. The day for the ceremony had already been fixed, and everything was ready. The importance of the step, she was about to take, somewhat sobered her heart, and the idea suddenly

entered her mind to pay a visit to her holy aunt at San Damiano and recommend herself to her prayers. Yielding to this influence, she set out for the Monastery without delay. Here a wonderful grace was in store for her, a grace which no one could in the least have anticipated, a grace prepared for her by the powerful prayers of her aunt, who had already been praying for Amata for a long time, that her eyes might be opened to see the dangers that lurk under the deceitful enchantments of the world.

Clare received her niece with all the marks of tender affection and listened to her most kindly. Then Clare opened her mouth to speak and, at once, began to discourse, in the most glowing terms, of another kind of nuptials, infinitely above the highest of this world, the espousals of the soul with the heavenly Bridegroom by perpetual virginity and retirement from the world. She pointed out the deceitfulness of earthly goods and the hollowness of the short-lived pleasures of this world, contrasting them with the serene peace and happiness to be enjoyed in the solitude of the cloister and the never ending reward of the heavenly joys secured for all eternity when this brief span of life was over and gone. Who could resist such burning words? Amata's eyes were opened. Grace had done its work, and Amata was conquered. She flung herself upon her aunt and, amid copious tears, declared her solemn resolution never to depart from her side. And she kept her word. Her friends and relatives, together with her affianced husband, came to the Monastery. They used persuasion and flattery. They raged and stormed. Yet all to no purpose. Amid all their entreaties and threats of violence, she preserved the greatest calm. She had but one answer to make, that she had fully resolved to have done with the world and to remain where she was.

Having entered upon the religious life Amata made wonderful progress in perfection. She was especially remark-

able for her great humility and wonderful love of penance and mortification in order to make some atonement for the frivolities of her previous life in the world. God was pleased to reward her with signal manifestations of His Divine favors.

During the long sickness of the Holy Abbess, it was Amata's duty and privilege to wait upon her aunt. One day, she had just left her for a moment. Upon her return she noticed a wonderful change in the countenance of the Saint. Her features, which before had been pinched and drawn were beaming with joy and happiness. "Dear mother," exclaimed Amata, "what has caused this sudden change?" "My dear daughter," replied S. Clare with all simplicity, "how can I help rejoicing, since at this moment, I hold in my arms my dearest Lord Who is the joy of my soul." At these words, Amata felt a great desire to behold the heavenly apparition. But a deep sense of her great unworthiness suddenly came upon her, and she fell upon her knees in silent devotion. And lo! her humility was rewarded. Jesus, the lover of humble souls, manifested Himself to her enraptured gaze and filled her heart with untold joy and sweetness.

Amata survived her aunt but a short time. She also was one of the sworn witnesses at the process of canonization of S. Clare. Her sacred remains were likewise transferred to the Church of S. Clare in the city.

B. Agnes, of Spello.

AGNES, of Spello, was the daughter of Don Opportulo Bernardo, who was a relative of S. Francis, and who acted as temporal protector of the monastery of San Damiano.

One day, when still very young, Agnes went with her mother for a visit to the monastery. The gentle ways of S. Clare made such an impression upon the innocent heart of the child, that she would not return home with her mother, but begged to be allowed to stay. "Happy they, that carry the yoke of the Lord from their youth,"[1] says Holy Scrip-

ture. This happiness fell to the share of Agnes in a special manner. She had never known the world and its dangers; and this blissful ignorance remained with her to her dying hour. She likewise preserved the sweet innocence and dove-like simplicity of her early childhood until death. And though she had never known sin, she, nevertheless, practiced the most severe austerities. She is the Sister, spoken of in the biography, who, one day, asked S. Clare to lend her one of her hair-shirts. Her request was granted; but after a few days' trial, she was compelled to return it. She felt it to be beyond her power of endurance, though it was an evident proof of her love of penance.

No wonder that God was pleased to overwhelm her with singular favors and blessings. She was adorned with the gift of miracles, and privileged with numerous celestial visions.

She, too, beheld, one day, the child Jesus in the arms of S. Clare.

Once, while listening to a celebrated preacher who spoke upon the second coming of Christ, she heard, all at once, a sweet voice which uttered within her soul these words: "My daughter! I am in the midst of you." From that moment, she sensibly felt the sweet presence of Jesus in her soul until she departed hence to be still more closely united to Him Whom on earth she had ever loved above all things.

Her body has, likewise, been deposited in the Church of S. Clare in Assisi.

B. Christina and others.

CHRISTINA was the daughter of Don Bernardo Suppio of Assisi. She had been an intimate friend of S. Clare, and had, like her, entertained, from her earliest childhood, a strong desire to consecrate herself to God in the cloister. No sooner, therefore, had the new Order been founded, than she

[1] Lament., III. 27.

hastened to join S. Clare, without whom she seemed to be unable to live. We have no particulars concerning her life. She was especially noted for her purity of heart. She lived forty-three years at San Damiano, and died in 1258, full of merits and good works. Her body rests close to that of S. Agnes in the Church of the Poor Clares in Assisi.

Another disciple of S. Clare was a young girl who, out of reverence for the Holy Patriarch, S. Francis. took the name of Francesca. She was particularly remarkable for her great love of prayer, and the wonderful favors God deigned to bestow upon her. In her ecstatic transports of love, she was always heard to say: "O God, Who hast wounded my soul with Thy love, never heal the wounds Thou hast inflicted." She was subject to severe bodily sufferings, which she bore with the greatest joy and patience. Once she was afflicted with excruciating pains in her head for the space of six months, till the Holy Abbess healed her miraculously.

B. Francesca had a sister, called Angelucia, whose life, according to her name, was indeed more angelic than human. She, too, entered the monastery of San Damiano where she edified all by a most virtuous life. S. Clare is said to have entertained towards her a special affection which is a sufficient encomium of her holiness and perfection.

Another religious, very dear to the Holy Abbess, was the venerable Sister Benvenuta. She lived at San Damiano twenty-six years, and was remarkable for the wonderful patience she manifested during a long protracted and painful sickness. She it was who assisted at the death of S. Clare, and who was favored to behold with her eyes the Blessed Virgin Mary and the glorious procession of Holy Virgins who had come to carry the blessed soul of the Saint to her heavenly reward.

There was another Sister who bore the same name of Benvenuta. She was a native of Perugia, and a distant rela-

tive of S. Clare. Being attracted by the example of her holy kinswoman, she came to Assisi to be admitted among her spiritual daughters. She was especially note-worthy for her absolute detachment from all earthly things and the marvelous fidelity in the observance of the smallest matter enjoined by obedience. She, too, was tried with sickness. For a time, she lost the use of speech until the Holy Abbess healed her by making upon her the sign of the cross.

B. Amata, the niece of S. Clare, had left behind her a sister, called Balbina, who was not long in joining her in holy religion. Here she led so holy and perfect a life that she was chosen, several times, both by S. Francis and by S. Clare, to found, or reform, a number of Religious houses. God endowed her with the gift of miracles which gave additional weight to the influence of her holy life and example. She died in 1240, at the Monastery of Val-di-Gloria at Spello which she had established and governed as Abbess.

Mention must also be made of B. Benedicta, of Assisi, whose holiness of life is sufficiently assured by the fact, that she was elected by the community to succeed S. Clare in the government of the Monastery. She also possessed the gift of miracles. After her death, her body was placed by the people in a marble tomb, another sign of the high esteem in which she was held by all.

Neither must we omit three more saintly disciples of S. Clare, namely B. Philippa, of Assisi, B. Lucia, of Rome, and B. Cecilia Gualteri, of Spello. They were remarkable for their great love of holy prayer and the wonderful revelations that were made known to them by God. They bore witness to a number of miracles wrought by S. Clare.

They died the death of the Saints after having edified all by a holy life.

B B. Ortolana and Beatrice.

AS soon as Countess Ortolana was left free upon the death of her husband, Count Favorino, she sold her earthly possessions, distributed the money among the poor, entrusted the care of her youngest daughter, Beatrice, to Count Monaldo, her brother-in-law, and hastened to San Damiano to enter the Institute of her holy daughter. S. Francis himself invested her with the religious habit. Her great holiness of life, adorned with the gift of miracles, has already been mentioned.

When Beatrice reached her eighteenth year, she, too, distributed her earthly goods among the poor and received the habit of penance and poverty. She was sent to several places to make new foundations of the Order.

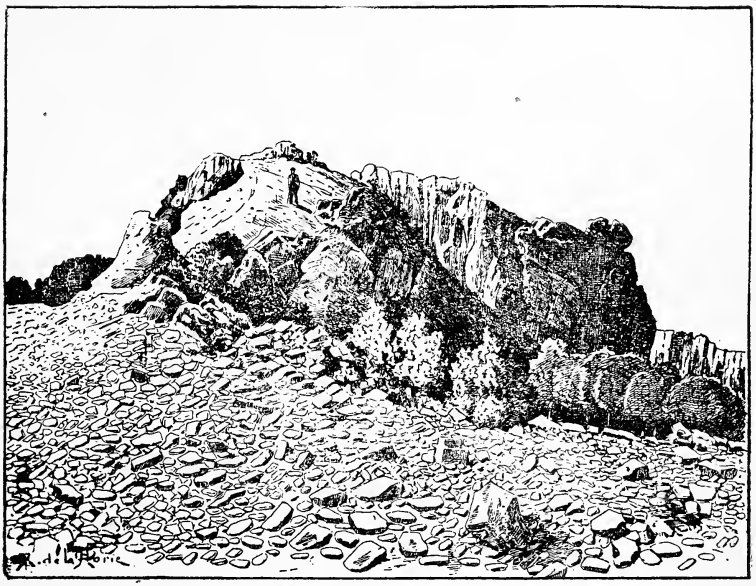
Both Ortolana and Beatrice died before S. Clare. Their sacred remains were afterwards transferred to the Church of S. Clare in Assisi.

S. Agnes of Assisi.

THE wonderful conversion of Agnes, sister of S. Clare, is fully described in the Life. The author also pays a high tribute to her exalted virtues. He, likewise, relates how she was present at her sister's death and followed her a few months later to the heavenly joys.

Agnes was sent by the Holy Patriarch to different places to found and govern new communities of the Order.

She was distinguished from the first years of her religious life for such a high degree of sanctity that her holy companions declared she seemed to have discovered a new road to perfection, known to none but herself. She severely chastised her body by voluntary mortification. She hardly ever partook of any food but bread and water, and that only in small quantities. Yet while severe towards herself, she was full of sweetness and compassion towards others. At the hour of recreation, she was always ready with some words of joy and comfort for her companions. Her love of prayer was so great, that she was known to spend whole



RUINS OF CASTLE SASSO ROSSO, BIRTH-PLACE OF S. CLARE.

(From a Photo.)

nights and days in its delightful exercise. God favored her in return with heavenly manifestations. Miracles, too, were wrought through her intercession.

During the years she was compelled to exercise the office of Abbess, she never ceased to give examples of the most exalted virtues, thus leading on her subjects in the path of holiness more by the force of example than by precept or persuasion; and the different monasteries she founded and governed became, under her guidance, nurseries of Saints.

The precious remains of S. Agnes repose in one of the chapels of the Church of the Poor Clares in Assisi.

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2. *FIRST FOUNDATIONS OF THE ORDER.*

THE ORDER IN ITALY.

Early foundations

ONE of the earliest, and probably the first, foundation of the Order, after that of San Damiano, was at *San Severino*, a small town in the Marches of Ancona. Here an entire community of Benedictine Nuns came over as a body, begging to be admitted into the new Order.

In 1248, B. Pacifica, accompanied by B. Andrea, was sent to *Spello,* a small town close to Assisi, to establish the Order, or rather introduce the Rule of the new Order, into a community, already in existence. How successfully she carried out the work, has already been mentioned.

There was another Monastery of the Order at Spello, at a place called *Val-di-Gloria,* established by B. Balbina.

B. Balbina had already founded a Monastery at *Arezzo* in Tuscany.

At *Perugia*, near Assisi, two Monasteries were established, the one dedicated to S. Luke, the other to our Lady of the Angels.

S. Agnes at Florence.

IN 1219, an important foundation was made at *Florence*. Agnes, the sister of S. Clare, was chosen by the Holy Patriarch for this work.

It was a sore trial for the loving heart of Agnes to be separated from her sister. A letter of hers, addressed to S. Clare, is still extant, in which she describes her great grief and sorrow in a most touching manner. The letter is quoted here at full length, as it shows the great love and affection existing between the two sisters, and, at the same time, proves that grace does not crush nature, but rather sanctifies and ennobles it.

Letter of Agnes to Clare.

"Agnes, the humble servant of Jesus, to the most beloved Clare, her venerable Mother and Mistress in Christ Jesus, and to her community.

"It is the condition of created things never to remain in the same state. Thus, it often happens that, at the moment of our greatest happiness, we are plunged into a sea of misery. Know, then, my Mother, that my heart is full of grief and deep sadness. What do I not suffer by being separated from you? You, with whom I had hoped to live and to die. I see the beginning of my sorrow, but I do not see its termination. It is one of those troubles which ever increase and to which one can see no end. It is a dark shadow ever darkening; a weary oppression that cannot be cast off. I had believed that we, who were united in heaven by the same faith and the same life, would have, on this earth, also, the same life and the same death, so that one tomb should enclose those of the same blood and of the same nature. But I was deceived. I am forsaken, and my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

"Oh, my sweet sister! Pity me; weep with me, and pray God that you may never suffer so terrible a trial. Believe me, that there is no sorrow like this sorrow; a sorrow which wrings my heart, a languor which wearies me constantly, a fire which consumes me without ceasing. Afflictions press upon me from every side. Oh! of your charity, help me by your holy prayers, that God may give me strength to support my sorrows.

"O, my Mother, what shall I do? what shall I say,

since I may never see you, or my sisters, again? Oh! that it were in my power to express all I feel! My heart is continually consumed with the fire of affliction. I sigh and weep, and seek for consolation which I cannot find. I am overwhelmed with sorrow upon sorrow; and I sink under the sad thought that I shall never see you again. No one here can understand my grief.

"There is, however, one consolation I have, and you will rejoice in it with me. It is the perfect harmony which reigns in our community. I was received with great joy and satisfaction, and all have promised me obedience with the utmost respect and devotion. All recommend themselves to God and to you. Think of us often, and regard them, as well as myself, as daughters and sisters who will be always ready to follow your advice and obey your commands.

"Our Holy Father, the Pope, has been pleased to acquiesce in my desires concerning the matter of which you know.

"Beg Brother Elias, from me, to visit and console us oftener. Farewell."

B. Helena Enselmini at Arcelli.

AGNES being full of zeal for the spread of the Order, established a number of monasteries, besides that of Monte-Cielo at Florence, principally at *Mantua, Venice,* and *Padua.*

The Monastery of Arcelli at Padua deserves special mention. It was founded by S. Francis himself; but its first Religious were trained in the spirit of the Order by S. Agnes. Later on, it was honored by frequent visits of the great S. Anthony of Padua, who, by his fervent words and deeds, wonderfully consoled and edified the Religious. Here, too, in the hospice of the Friars, attached to the Monastery of Poor Clares, the Great Wonder-worker breathed his last. Here his body remained until its removal into the city. But Arcelli became still more famous for being the abode of B. Helena Enselmini, one of the spiritual children of S. Anthony.

Helena came of a noble family in Padua. She was one of those privileged souls whom God draws to Himself, from their earliest childhood, in an extraordinary manner. Worldly pomp and state had no attraction for her. Riches and pleas-

ures were a veritable burden to her. Nothing in her eyes seemed to equal the bliss of solitude.

She was twelve years old when she entered the Monastery of Arcelli where she soon became an example to all the Religious by her perfect obedience, her angelic purity, her spirit of penance, her love of prayer, and, above all, by her tender devotion to the sufferings of Jesus Crucified.

One night, God gave her to understand that she would have to pass through the ordeal of long and painful sicknesses, before she could hope to enter upon the joys of heaven. She at once prepared herself for the coming trial with the utmost fervor. She received the Sacraments and redoubled her prayers and penances. Within the course of a few days, she became dumb; a little later she was struck blind; and finally her whole body was paralyzed. In this condition she remained for sixteen years.

Yet in proportion as her bodily sufferings increased, her interior union with Jesus became stronger each day; and the joy which filled her heart, showed itself visibly upon her features; for the more she was cut off from the outer world, the more did God manifest Himself to her internally.

She was especially favored with wonderful visions and divine revelations. In fact, her soul seemed to have passed already beyond its earthly condition and to converse freely with the inhabitants of the other world. Thus, she would mingle with the multitudes of just and holy souls that surround the Throne of God; or communicate with the angels who would converse with her upon the infinite perfections of the Ever-Blessed Trinity; or pay a visit to the poor souls in Purgatory and see how they were being relieved by the suffrages offered up in their behalf.

These revelations she would make known to the Sisters for their consolation and edification, though it is not mentioned how she did so, unless it was by manual signs after the

fashion of deaf-mutes. Her hearing had been left her, so that others could easily make themselves understood to her; and she, also, retained the partial use of her fingers, so as to be able to communicate, in some manner, with others.

The last three months of her life were almost a continual miracle, as she took no nourishment of any kind. She died towards the end of the year 1241. Numerous miracles attested her sanctity.

B. Philippa Mareria.

IN the valley of Rieti, in the Abbruzzi mountains, there lived the noble family of Mareria, Don Pietro and Donna Imperatrice. Francis was ever a most welcome guest at their home, and they were devotedly attached to him.

They had a daughter, called Philippa, who, by reason of her singular purity of soul attracted the attention of S. Francis, and made him pray for her often and fervently, so that one, so endowed by heaven, should not waste such treasures upon earthly concerns. Philippa's mind was soon made up. She longed to consecrate her life to God. Yet her parents, though devout and God-fearing, failed to see in their daughter's choice the Will of God and opposed her in every way. A suitable marriage, befitting her rank and condition, had already been arranged; and she was urged, on every side, especially by her brother Thomas, to give her consent. But she steadfastly refused. At first she retired to her own apartments, but as this retreat did not sufficiently screen her from the importunities of her friends, she left her home in the company of some pious women who were animated by the same aspirations as herself. They fled to a neighboring mountain where they took shelter in a grotto and entered upon a life of prayer, penance, and solitude. Her brother Thomas, who had opposed her most, could not but admire his sister's courage and fortitude, and went in search of her. Having discovered her retreat, he begged pardon of her and offered her a more suitable asylum. There was an ancient neglected monastery near the parish Church at Mareria.

This was repaired and fitted up; and here Philippa and her companions commenced their religious career.

The new Community had, at first, no special rule for observance. But the remembrance of S. Francis led them to adopt the Rule of S. Clare. B. Roger, of Todi, one of the disciples of S. Francis, was charged, by the holy Patriarch himself, with their spiritual guidance. Philippa surpassed all the Sisters by her deep humility, her fervor in prayer and her great austerities. Though she held the office of Abbess, she, nevertheless, deemed herself the least in the monastery, performing the most lowly services of the house and doing all to lighten the burden of the Sisters.

She was also noted for her burning zeal and charity on behalf of poor sinners, pouring forth tears and supplications at the foot of the crucifix for their conversion; and whenever an opportunity presented itself, she would address them in such touching terms that none could resist.

She was also favored with the gift of miracles like S. Clare. She once multiplied a few loaves so as to last an entire week.

Her holy death took place February 13th, 1236. B. Roger preached the funeral oration in which he described her singular holiness and perfection, and did not hesitate to call upon his hearers to honor and invoke her as a Saint. Her veneration, which commenced from that moment, was ratified by Pope Innocent IV, so that B. Philippa was the first of the Order of S. Clare who was publicly honored even at the life-time of the holy Abbess.

THE ORDER IN FRANCE.

Rheims and other places.

WHETHER S. Clare had inherited Francis' singular predilection for France, or whether other reasons inclined her to that direction, it is an historic fact, that the first establishments, of the Order, outside Italy, were made in France.

The first monastery, as far as can be ascertained, was

that of *Rheims*. The Archbishop of that place, William of Joinville, petitioned S. Clare for some of her Religious. S. Clare chose Mary of Braie, the descendent of a noble family in Lombardy, and several companions. The new foundation prospered wonderfully, and very speedily others followed. Soon there were monasteries of the Order at *Montpellier, Metz, Besancon, Cahirs, Bordeaux*, and other places.

Theobald, King of Narvarre, founded a monastery in the Provence.

At *Marseilles,* a monastery was established, in 1254, by two Sisters from Assisi, under the title of our Lady of Nazareth.

B. Isabelle of France.

But the principal Patroness of the Order in France was B. Isabelle, daughter of King Louis VIII, and Queen Blanche of Castille. She always had entertained the greatest esteem and veneration for the Sisters of S. Clare at Rheims, and, at length, obtained the necessary grant from her royal brother, S. Louis, to establish a foundation at Paris. This resulted in the erection of the celebrated royal Abbey of Longchamp, under title of the Humility of our Lady. Four Religious were obtained from Rheims to introduce the new mode of life. Here B. Isabelle, together with a number of noble ladies, vowed her virginity to God. For particular reasons, the rigors of the Rule were somewhat mitigated and special regulations drawn up. Other foundations were established from this place, one of them in London, in 1295. Isabelle died, February 23rd, 1270, in her fifty-fifth year, and was beatified by Pope Leo X.

THE ORDER IN SPAIN.

Wonderful introduction of the Order into Spain.

THE introduction of the Order into Spain was of quite a marvellous nature. One day, the holy Abbess felt inspired to send some of her Sisters to Spain with a view of establishing the Order in that country. She chose for this purpose two Religious, Agnes and Clare, both of Assisi. Agnes was

her own niece, being the daughter of Penenda and sister of Amata and Balbina. Clare was a niece of Agnes. They sat out on their journey and took sail for the coast of Spain.

One morning, the inhabitants of Barcellona were surprised to see a boat without sail, mast, or rudder approach the coast. Their wonder still more increased, when they beheld two Nuns step on land. The two Sisters were at once surrounded by the inhabitants of the city anxious to know who they were and whence they had come. They answered in all simplicity that they came from Assisi in Italy, having been sent by the holy Abbess Clare to establish houses of the Order in Spain. The people then knew who they were, for Assisi was a name well known to them. In fact, they possessed a convent of Franciscan Friars in their midst. The guardian of the convent was at once made acquainted of the arrival of the two Sisters, and he was not long in making his appearance. He welcomed the Religious and conducted them to the Bishop who assigned them, as a temporary abode, a little hermitage and chapel, dedicated to S. Anthony, the Hermit. A number of candidates soon begged to be admitted into the Order, and a suitable monastery was built for them by the inhabitants of the city.

Agnes was the first Abbess, and held that office, at the express command of the Bishop, until her holy death, which took place in 1281, after a life of sixty-eight years in the Order. She was succeeded as Abbess by Clare who died about three years later.

Their bodies were, at first, buried in the common cemetery of the Sisters, but, afterwards, on account of some wonderful manifestations, taken up and deposited, with great honors, under the Altar of S. John, the Apostle, where numerous miracles bore witness to their holiness of life and their powerful intercession with God.

THE ORDER IN BELGIUM.

Wonderful vocation of Ermentrude.

THERE lived, in the city of Cologne, in Germany, a pious maiden, called Ermentrude, whom God had evidently chosen for some special work, on account of the wonderful favors for which she was remarkable from her childhood. She was an example and edification to the entire city by her pure and virtuous life. At length, her parents died; and she prayed to God most fervently to know His Divine Will in her regard. One day, while she was thus engaged in prayer, a voice seemed to resound in her ears, saying: "My daughter! go, and consult your Master, and follow his directions; for you shall enter upon the eternal joys of heaven in the company of a number of Virgins who shall call you their Mother." "I shall do, Lord, whatever Thou wouldst have me to do," she replied as an humble child, and, at once, went in search of her spiritual director, a Religious of the Order of S. Dominic, a grave and prudent man. To him she opened her heart, and begged of him to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass that God might be pleased to make known to him what He wanted her to do. The Religious did so, and being enlightened from on high, said to her: "Ermentrude, the voice, you have heard, was no illusion, and you are bound to do God's Will. Take courage, therefore; leave your home, and go whithersoever the Divine Spirit Himself will guide your steps. More than this I cannot tell." Upon hearing these words, the docile soul raised her eyes and hands towards heaven, and cried out: "Thanks to Thee, O Lord God, Who art my Guide and my Master. Behold, I am ready to do Thy Most Holy Will. To Thee I submit myself without reserve. Thy Divine Law shall forever be engraven on my heart."

Ermentrude had a good and pious friend who, all along, had been with her of one mind and one heart. So the two set out together on their journey, without taking leave of anyone, or ever turning back to look upon the city, which

had been their home. For a time, they journeyed along the borders of the Rhine, and after many days of painful wandering, they arrived at the city of Bruges in Belgium. They felt they had now arrived at their journey's end. So here they settled down, and commenced to lead a humble penitential life to the great admiration of the inhabitants. The fame of their virtues soon attracted a number of disciples, desirous of sharing in their mode of life; and in a short time, Ermentrude found herself at the head of a large community of devoted virgins. Having no fixed Rule to properly regulate their daily lives, Ermentrude earnestly begged of God to enlighten her in this matter; and, hence, she prayed to Him thus: "Lord, Thou knowest that it was for Thee I left my home and my country. Till now Thou hast been pleased to guide me by Thy holy angel and to feed me with the bread of Thy table. But look upon the number of daughters and sisters, whom Thou Thyself hast led to me, and whom I, Thy least and most unworthy handmaid, am called upon to guide in the paths of Thy commandments. O Lord, I do not refuse the labor. Yet, what shall become of me if Thou dost not dispel the darkness of my mind? Deign, therefore, Dearest Lord, to show me the way which Thou wishest me to follow, and do Thou with me according to Thy Most Holy Will." God heard her humble prayer, and a voice spoke to her, saying: "Take for your model the Virgin of Assisi."

Clare's letter to Ermentrude.

The fame of S. Clare had already spread into Belgium. Ermentrude immediately wrote to the holy Abbess of San Damiano, and shortly after received the following reply:

"To her dearest Sister Ermentrude,
Clare, the lowly handmaid of Christ.
Health and peace in the Lord.

"I have heard, dearest Sister, how, by the grace of God, you have happily renounced the world, and I am delighted in the depth of my soul. I rejoice with you at the generous resolution you have formed, and I admire the wonderful zeal

with which you run, day by day, in the ways of perfection, together with your happy companions.

"I pray you to remain faithful until death to Him to Whom you have consecrated your lives, and be assured that, in recompense of your labors, you will obtain the crown of everlasting life. Remember that the time of trial and of sufferings is short and that, on the other hand, the happiness, in store for you, will last forever. Let not the tumult and pomp of the world have ought to do with you; for the world passes away like a shadow. Be not carried away with its flattering appearances, for they are deceitful. The old serpent will hiss and try to frighten you. "But resist the devil and he will flee from you."(1) Be not discouraged by adversity, neither puffed up with success; for it is the property of faith to keep a soul humble in success, and to make it strong in adversity. Render to God with all fidelity what you have promised Him by your vows; and be exact in so doing, for He knows how to recompense your sacrifice. Look up to heaven which invites you to take up the cross and follow Christ, Who walks before you; for "through many tribulations, we must enter into the Kingdom of God."(2) Love with your whole hearts the good God Who is deserving our love above all things, and love His dear Son Who for us poor sinners was nailed to the Cross. Let nothing hinder you from constantly thinking of God in your hearts. Meditate continually upon the mysteries of His sufferings and upon the sorrows of His Blessed Mother, standing at the foot of the cross. Watch and pray without ceasing. Be ever careful to persevere in the good course you have begun. Fulfill the ministry, with which you have been charged, in entire poverty and sincere humility. Fear not, my dearest daughter! "The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works."(3) He will pour out upon you and upon your daughters the abundance of His Divine blessing. He will be your helper and consoler, your Savior, and your everlasting Reward, exceeding great.

"Let us pray for one another, and "carry each other's burden, the sweet yoke of love; and thus shall we easily fulfill the law of Christ."(4) "So be it."

(1) James, IV, 7.
(2) Acts, XIV, 21.
(3) Psalm, CXLIV, 13.
(4) Galatians, VI, 2.

This letter of S. Clare filled the heart Ermentrude with great joy and consolation. The holy Rule, in force at San Damiano, was at once introduced and faithfully observed. After the death of S. Clare, Ermentrude journeyed to Rome to obtain pontificial sanction to extend the Order, and thus a number of monasteries were founded throughout Belgium and the northern parts of France.

The time and place of the death of Ermentrude is not on record.

THE ORDER IN BOHEMIA.

B. Agnes of Bohemia.

BOHEMIA has preserved the most precious documents which attest the apostolic zeal and loving solicitude of the holy Abbess of Assisi. These documents are addressed to B. Agnes, who was instrumental in establishing the Order in Bohemia. We must pay a passing tribute to her singularly interesting and holy life.

Agnes was born at Prague about the year 1200, the exact date being unknown. Her father was Primislas, King of Poland; and her mother was Constance, sister of Andrew II., King of Hungary, and aunt of S. Elizabeth of Hungary.

At the age of three, Agnes was betrothed to Boleslas, the son of Henry, Duke of Silesia, and of S. Hedwige, and was, according to the custom of those days, sent to the court of the young Prince of Silesia. Here her education was confided to the Cistercian Nuns of the Monastery of Trebnitz. Shortly afterwards, S. Hedwige, being left a widow, retired to the same monastery, and took charge of the young princess. Prince Henry, however, died, three years later; and Agnes was taken back to Bohemia and placed with the Nuns of the Premonstratensian Order at Doxane.

Not long afterwards, the German Emperor, Frederic II, sent a solemn embassy to Bohemia and sued for the hand of Agnes on behalf of his son, Prince Henry. In consequence of this, Agnes was sent to the court of Leopold,

Duke of Austria, to learn the language and customs of the Germans. But God had other designs in her regard. Being enlightened internally by the Divine Spirit, she took greater pains to advance in the Science of the Saints than in the knowledge and acquirements befitting the rank for which she was destined. The brilliant career before her had no charms whatever. She longed for prayer and solitude, and besought God in the secret of her heart to be enabled to consecrate to Him her virginity. Her prayer was answered. Prince Henry married the daughter of Leopold, and Agnes was free once more to return home.

But here another trial was in store for her. The Emperor Frederic himself, having become a widower by the death of Yolanda, demanded the hand of Agnes. Yet Agnes was not discouraged. She merely increased her prayers and penances. At length, the time fixed for the marriage approached, and Frederic sent an embassy to conduct his affianced bride to the imperial court. In this difficulty Agnes privately appealed to the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory IX, to whom she made known her ardent longing and implored him to use his authority to prevent a marriage, to which she had never given her consent. The Pope sent a special Nuncio to Bohemia to take the holy Princess under his protection.

When the Emperor was informed of the state of affairs, he was, at first, highly incensed at her refusal, yet he calmed down soon and released Agnes from any obligation she might have contracted. He even praised her firmness and uttered these memorable words: "Had she left me for a mortal man, I would know how to avenge myself with the sword. But I can take no offense when she prefers to me the King of Heaven." These were noble words coming from a generous heart, inspired by faith. What a pity that such a man allowed himself to be carried away by a tyrannous ambition which brought him to a miserable end.

Agnes was at length free to give herself wholly to God;

and she hastened to be admitted into the monastery she had already founded in the city of Prague for the daughters of S. Clare. She received the holy habit from the hands of the Apostolic Nuncio, in the presence of the royal family and the nobles of Bohemia. This took place on Pentecost Sunday, in the year 1236.

If the life of Agnes was admirable in the world, it became still more so in the cloister. It suffices to say that she edified all by her eminent and heroic virtues. God was pleased to endow her with the gift of miracles and prophecy.

She died March 6th, 1280, being about eighty years of age.

We subjoin the letters addressed to her by S. Clare, who always entertained a special love and tenderness for the holy and devoted Princess of Bohemia.

First letter of S. Clare to B. Agnes.

"To the Noble and Venerable Virgin Agnes, Daughter of the powerful and invincible King of Bohemia.

"Clare, the lowly hand-maid of Christ, and servant of the Virgins, consecrated to God, in the Monastery of San Damiano, renders homage in the Lord, and desires for her, with all respect and ardor, the glory of eternal felicity.

" The fame of your virtues, already known almost throughout the world, has reached us, most noble Princess, and we rejoice thereat greatly in the Lord; not only we ourselves, but all those who are anxious to do the will of God and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

"It is true then that you have trampled under foot the most brilliant honors, the most enviable glory of the world, even the throne of the august Emperor to whom you might have become allied, as became both you and his majesty, and that you have embraced, with your whole soul and with intense desire, Holy Poverty, the subdueing of the flesh, and the lowly estate of our Divine Redeemer, Whom you have chosen for your inheritance. Have confidence! God will enable you by his grace, to preserve intact the priceless treasure of virginity. His power is above all other power; His amiability transcends that of any other being; His beauty

casts into shade whatever is most beautiful. His love satisfies all desires, and is worth more than all earthly delight.

"How happy you are, therefore, to have been chosen by this Divine Bridegroom Who in the style of the language of Sacred Scripture, has adorned your neck with precious stones, your ears with rings of inestimable value, your breast with a cincture of purest gold, your brow with a dazzling crown, marked with the seal of holiness. Therefore, my dearest Sister, or rather reverend Lady, since you are, at once, the Spouse, Sister, and Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, be proud to walk under the noble banner of inviolate virginity and Holy Poverty, the which you have chosen for your sovereign mistress.[1] Continue to walk, with all fervor, on the road upon which you have entered with so much courage, and persevere in imitating the virtues of Him Who, for love of us, was born in poverty, lived in poverty, and died in poverty upon a cross under the most fearful torments, in order to set us free from the slavery of the Prince of Darkness and reconcile us to His heavenly Father.

"O blessed Poverty, to which is promised the Kingdom of heaven and glory everlasting! O blessed Poverty, which givest to those that love and embrace thee such priceless goods and a life so happy and so free of all unrest! O amiable Poverty, which hast been loved so especially and so tenderly, and hast been embraced so fondly by our Lord Who has created all things by one word of His mouth, Who has governed them, and will govern them, all days with Sovereign Power! He Himself assures us: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air, nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."[2] And in truth, from the day on which the Divine Lord descended into the womb of a pure Virgin to unite Himself to our humanity, He was made poor and needy, so that men, who were poor and needy in heavenly goods, might be made rich with the treasures of His grace and possess the Kingdom of heaven.

"Since then, the only Son of God would not rest His bleeding Head except upon a cross, should not you, my daughter, exult with gladness and rejoice in spirit, because you have preferred the contempt of this world to its honors, poverty to riches, and the treasures of heaven to those of

[1] S. Francis was wont to call Holy Poverty his sovereign lady and mistress.

[2] Math. VIII, 20.

earth! Yes, I have no need to remind you of what you believe so firmly, that the Kingdom of heaven is promised to the poor, and that the poor alone shall possess it. You know that, when we love the things of this earth, we lose the fruit of Divine love, and that we cannot serve two masters, at one and the same time, without displeasing either the one, or the other. You know that he, who is impeded by his garments, cannot enter upon a combat with one who is naked; and that we cannot hope to fight successfully without stripping ourselves entirely; and that earthly adornments are only means in the hands of our enemy to lay hold on us more easily. Yes, my Sister, it is difficult to live in luxury in this world and to reign with Christ in the other. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven."[1] You have, therefore, done well to cast aside these superfluous garments, that is, the goods of this earth. You will now be able to overcome all the more easily its attacks. You have been wise and prudent to enter upon the narrow road which leads to glory. O happy exchange! to leave the goods of time for those of eternity, to merit the things of heaven by sacrificing the things of earth, to obtain a hundredfold, and life everlasting:—this is a transaction, worthy of all praise, and a token of most perfect prudence. Hence I entreat your Highness, in the bonds of Jesus Christ, to remain faithful in the service of the great King. Ever increase in all goodness; advance from virtue to virtue, so that He, Whom you have followed, with the utmost intensity of your soul, may be pleased to overwhelm you with the abundance of His Divine favors.

"I also beg of you, in the Lord, to be mindful of me, your unworthy handmaid, and of the other devoted Sisters who live with me in this monastery. Be pleased to recommend us to our dear Lord in your holy prayers, so that, aided by His merits, we may obtain the mercy of Jesus Christ and be found worthy to enjoy with Him everlasting happiness.

"Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me. Alleluia."

Second letter of S. Clare to B. Agnes

B. Agnes had asked S. Clare for a personal keepsake. In answer to this request, she sent her, along with this second letter, a wooden cross, a rough cincture, a coarse veil of can-

[1] Matt. XIX, 24.

vass, and the earthenware bowl out of which she used to drink. These objects were treasured by B. Agnes as precious relics, and when Clare had been canonized, she caused them, through the medium of her brother, King Wenceslas, to be encased in gold and silver, and ordered them to be always kept, with great reverence, in the Monastery of Prague. Miracles are said to have been wrought through their instrumentality.

"To Agnes, the Daughter of the King of Kings, a Queen among Virgins, to a worthy Spouse of Jesus Christ, through union with Whom she has, in truth, been made Queen.

"Clare, an unworthy and unprofitable servant of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano.

"Health and the happiness ever to live in utmost Poverty.

"Thanks be to God, the Author of all good, the Source of every perfection and heavenly gift, for having embellished your soul with so many virtues! He it is Who has sanctified you in every way, and raised you to such a degree of purity that His eyes can find in you no imperfections which might offend Him. Happy are you; for this holiness will move the Heavenly King to unite Himself to you in perpetual joy in that resplendent abode of His, where He is seated upon His starry throne. You have despised the grandeurs of an earthly kingdom; you have disdained the glory of a princely marriage; and, being carried away by the unspeakable delights of holy Poverty, you have solemnly engaged yourself to walk, with joy and love, in the footprints of Jesus Christ. Yes, you are truly worthy of that union to which you aspire. Knowing that your heart is the sanctuary of Christian virtues, I will not weary you with a long discourse, though you will find, perhaps, nothing superfluous in words which fill our souls with spiritual comfort. I will remind you of but one thing, since it is so necessary, and that is the obligation of persevering in the good resolutions with which God has inspired us by His grace.

"I exhort you, therefore, for love of Him to Whom you have offered yourself as a sacrifice of sweet odor, ever to be mindful of your vocation, and, like another Rachel, to look back upon the beginning, that is, to consider in your heart what you were in those happy days when you first renounced

the world. Preserve what you already hold. Do what you have to do. Never stop in the spiritual course upon which you have entered. March ahead with a lively step, and without stopping to rest, lest you should be tarnished with the dust of earthly things. Ever keep yourself in the calm and joy of a good conscience, and advance upon this blessed road, without ever yielding to anything that would turn you aside from your good resolutions and place an obstacle to your onward course. Constantly tend to that perfection to which the Holy Ghost has called you, so that you may offer to the Most High, without ceasing, the vows acceptable in His sight, and that you may obey, with ever greater fidelity, the commandments of our Lord, and the counsels of our Father, Friar Elias, Minister General of our Order. Have the firm resolution to prefer his counsels to all others; look upon his directions as a precious treasure. Should anyone insinuate to you anything, contrary to your perfection and holy vocation, give it no heed, even though you should thereby be enabled to obtain honors and goods that would lift you up above all men. This is not the thing after which you must aspire. Live in poverty; hold fast to Jesus, Who made Himself so poor; consider the humiliations, which He embraced for you sake, and follow Him, so that, if needs be, you become, for His sake, an object of contempt in the eyes of the world. Your heavenly Bridegroom is "beautiful in form above the sons of men;"[1] and yet, He became "the reproach of men and the outcast of the people."[2] He permitted His Body to be torn by scourges, and He breathed forth His Spirit amidst the most frightful agonies upon a cross. Should you not, therefore, noble Queen, feel yourself inflamed with an ardent longing to imitate Him? If you suffer with Him, you shall also be glorified with Him. If you mourn with Him, you shall also rejoice with Him. If you remain with Him fastened to the cross, you will also taste with Him the sweetness of heaven to be enjoyed in the light of the Saints. Your name will be written in the Book of Life, and shall shine throughout all eternity. In exchange for the perishable goods of this earth, you will obtain treasures that will last forever; and, by bearing now a few sufferings, you will merit eternal happiness.

[1] Psalm XLIV., 3.
[2] Psalm XXI., 7.

"Fare-well, my dearest Sister, Virgin ever-blessed of your Bridegoom! My Sisters and myself who rejoice at the good things with which God has so abundantly blessed you, place a lively confidence in your holy prayers. Do you, therefore, along with your Sisters, recommend us, in your charity, most earnestly to God, our Lord."

Third letter of S. Clare to B. Agnes.

The third letter was sent in answer to certain questions which Agnes had asked concerning the observance of the Rule.

"To Sister Agnes, a Virgin, whom I highly honor in our Lord Jesus Christ, one who is dear to me above all mortals, to the Daughter of the illustrious King of Bohemia, and now Sister and Spouse of the King of Heaven.

"Clare, the lowly and unworthy handmaid of God and of the Poor Ladies, wishes salutary joy in the Author of salvation together with everything good to be desired.

"The news we have received of your good health, of the progress you are making in the way of salvation, and of the fervor with which you persevere so admirably, in view of the eternal recompense, always fill our heart with a most lively joy. What a happiness to think that, by your zeal in imitating the poor and humble Jesus, you supply for our faults and defects, and that you so amply compensate for our imperfections in the imitation of this Divine Model! Yea, truly might I leap for very joy in the Lord, and I fear not that anyone could take this joy from me, when I see that you triumph with such noble courage over the deceits of the enemy of souls, over pride and vanity, which, day after day, corrupt the hearts of the children of men, and lead them to folly and perdition. A rare prudence is guiding you. The grace of God is aiding you. You have discovered that hidden treasure of the Gospel. You have bought it of Him Who, by His Almighty Power, has created all things out of nothing, and you possess this treasure by the power of humility, faith, and poverty which you have chosen for your inheritance. You have become, if I may use the words of the Apostle, "God's coadjutor,"[1] that is, a fellow-helper of Jesus Christ in the noble work of the salvation of souls. You have become the prop and support of the weak and suffering members of His mystical Body. Hence no one, I

[1] 1 Cor. III. 9.

repeat confidently, shall ever hinder me from rejoicing. Do you, also, rejoice with me in the Lord, my dearest Sister, and never allow bitter sadness to trouble the peace and serenity of your mind.

"O Virgin, much beloved in Jesus Christ, joy of the angels and crown of our Sisters, raise the eyes of your mind to the mirror of eternity! Contemplate the living splendors of the heavenly glory. Let your mind repose in the invisible and imperishable form of the Divine Essence, and, through the wholesome meditation upon His Divine Attributes, transform yourself into the likeness of His Divinity, so that you may experience that which is given to His friends to experience, and that you may, even now, enjoy a foretaste of the hidden sweetness, which God Almighty has prepared from the beginning for His Beloved and for all those who despise the seductions of this treacherous and corrupt world and leave to this earth its goods and its vanities. Wholly love Him, Who has given Himself wholly to you, Him Whose infinite perfections the sun and the moon admire, and Whose greatness is without end or limits. Love the Most High Son of the Eternal Father, the Divine Word, born of one who was a Virgin and who remains a Virgin for ever. Love that sweetest of Mothers who conceived in her chaste womb Him Whom the heavens cannot contain, who bore Him in her virginal bosom, who gave Him suck with her breasts. Oh the misery of men, who, by an incomprehensible blindness, render void such touching mysteries! Oh the malice of the enemy of souls who spares no pains to make the human race forfeit, by means of these vain and perishable goods, the inestimable price of so many sacrifices made by God Himself in their regard! O my dearest Sister, nothing is greater than a faithful soul. It is greater even than heaven. For while all other creatures cannot contain the Creator, a faithful soul alone is His dwelling-place, His seat, His throne, as the Eternal Truth Itself assures us in these words: 'If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him'. [1] What could be more honorable than this? In the same way as the ever-glorious Virgin Mother bore the veritable God-Man in her chaste womb, even so can you, by imitating His humility and pov-

[1] John XIV. 23.

erty, carry Him, in a spiritual manner, in your heart. How many Kings and Queens whose pride soars in the skies and touches the very firmament of heaven, end with falling into the dust, whilst you and your Sisters who despise all earthly riches, taste forever an imperishable bliss.

"I now answer the questions you asked me concerning the feast-days on which we are allowed to use other food than we otherwise use each day, and I shall also point out to you those days which our holy Father, S. Francis, has taught us to celebrate in a special manner. Without speaking of the weak and infirm Sisters, whom our Blessed Founder recommended to be treated with the utmost care, I tell you, that all those amongst us who are strong and in good health, are not allowed, whether it be on ordinary days or on feast-days, to eat any other food except such as is permitted on days of fasting and abstinence. We fast every day, except on Sundays, and on Christmas-day, on which days we are allowed two meals, and also on Thursdays, as each one feels disposed, so that she who thinks she ought not to fast, may not be compelled to do so. But we, who are in good health, fast every day excepting Sundays, Christmas-day, and the days of Easter-time; as the Rule of our holy Father S. Francis ordains. Likewise, we are not bound to fast on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Apostles, unless they fall on a Friday, though, as I have said, we who are strong and in good health, always use Lenten Food. Still, as 'our strength is not the strength of stones, nor is our flesh of brass, [1] I earnestly entreat you, in the Lord, not to carry the rigors of your abstinence too far, as I am told you do, but to be more moderate, to the end that, by continuing to live with full confidence in God, you may render Him a reasonable service, and that the holocaust you offer to Him be seasoned with the salt of prudence.

"Farewell in the Lord, as is our earnest wish, and allow me to recommend both my Sisters and myself to the fervent prayers of your holy Community. So be it!"

[1] Job, VI. 12.

Fourth letter of S. Clare to B. Agnes.

"To Agnes, the illustrious Queen, the one half of my soul, and the special sanctuary of my heart's affections, to my dearest Mother and Daughter, especially beloved above all others:"
"Clare, an unworthy hand-maid of Christ, and unprofitable servant of his servants in the monastery of San Damiano."
"Health and grace in the Lord."

To the end that she may "sing the new canticle" in the company of the other holy Virgins "before the Throne of God and of the Lamb," and "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."[1]

O my Mother, and my Daughter, Spouse of the King of all ages! If I have not written to you as often as both my soul and yours desired, be not surprised, and never think for a moment that the ardor of love with which I am inflamed for you, could, in any way, have diminished. As even your own mother could have loved you, so do I love you. The only reason which prevented more frequent communications was the scarcity of messengers and the great dangers of the road. But now, having found an opportunity of writing to you, I leap for joy and I rejoice with you O Spouse of Christ in the joy of the Holy Ghost. For just as the first S. Agnes was united with the spotless "Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world," [2] so to you also, O happy soul! has been given the grace to enjoy the ineffable delights of that union, upon which the heavenly hosts gaze with rapture; the desire of which ravishes all hearts; the thought of which yields sweet refreshment; the excellence of which replenishes with joy; the odor of which quickens the dead; the contemplation of which beatifies the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the splendor of glory, the brightness of eternal light, the mirror without stain.

Each day, look into this mirror, O Queen and Spouse of Jesus Christ! Behold in it your countenance to the end, that you may embellish youself, both internally and externally, with the manifold flowers of all virtues, and adorn yourself as becometh a daughter and spouse of the most High. My well beloved! it will be permitted to you, with the grace of God, to take complacency in looking into this mirror. Come, and see there, first of all, your sweetest Jesus, lying in a manger, in the greatest poverty, and

[1] Apocalypse, XIV, 3, 4.
[2] John, I, 29.

wrapped in poor swaddling clothes. Oh admirable humility! Oh astounding poverty! to behold the King of Angels, the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, lying in a manger! Contemplate the poverty and humility out of love for which He deigned to undergo such sufferings. Contemplate the unspeakable love which caused Him to be fastened to the wood of the cross and to die a most shameful death. Hear Him as He calls from that cross to all that pass by: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." [1] Let us answer Him as He is calling and moaning; let us answer Him with the self-same voice and the same heart: "I will be mindful and remember," my Divine Jesus, "and my soul shall languish within me." [2]

Be then inflamed, great Queen, with the ardors of this Divine love, and be mindful of the incomparable delights, the endless riches, and the eternal glory of the heavenly King, and, sighing with intense longing, cry out in the fervor of your soul: "Draw me; we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments." [3] O Divine Bridegroom! I shall run and shall not be at rest until Thou "bring me into the spiritual cellar of mystic wine," [4] and "thy left hand be under my head, and Thy right hand embrace me" [5] and "Thou kiss me with the kiss of Thy mouth." [6]

In the midst of these contemplations, remember your poor mother, and know that your happy memory is indelibly engraven upon my heart; for I love you more than all. What can I say more? The tongue of the body must be silent when I wish to express my love for you. It is the tongue of the spirit which must speak. O daughter, everblessed. For the love I have for you no bodily tongue can tell. Therefore, what I have written, can never suffice. Yet accept it, with a good heart, and, at least, be convinced of the maternal affection which I always cherish for you and for your daughters.

Most worthy Sister Agnes! I recommend to you and to yours, most earnestly in our Lord, both myself and my companions.

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[1] Lament, I, 12.
[2] Lament, III, 20.
[3] Canticles, I, 3.
[4] Canticles, II, 4.
[5] Canticles, II, 6.
[6] Canticles, I, 1.

"Farewell, my best beloved! Farewell, both you and your daughters, till we meet before the throne of glory of our great God."

"Pray to Him for us! So be it!"

SOME OTHER ROYAL LADIES WHO FOUNDED MONASTERIES AND JOINED THE ORDER.

B. Salome.

SALOME was born at Cracow, about the year 1200. She was the daughter of Lescow V, a Polish prince and ruler of Cracovia and Sandomir.

At the age of three, she was betrothed to Coloman, son of Andrew, king of Hungary, and brother of S. Elizabeth, of Hungary, and was, consequently, sent to the court of her affianced husband.

While still very young, she was inspired to consecrate her virginity to God by vow, in spite of her impending marriage, and she prayed most fervently, that God might enable her to keep her solemn pledge.

At the age of thirteen, she was united in marriage to Prince Coloman. But on the day of her marriage, she succeeded in persuading her husband to consecrate himself also to God by a vow of virginity. This vow both kept most faithfully during the twelve years they lived together.

Coloman died in 1225, while fighting against the Tartars, an enemy both to his faith and to his country.

In 1240, Salome retired from the world and entered the monastery of S. Clare at Zavichost, which she herself had founded, and which afterwards had to be removed to Scalen on account of the frequent inroads of Russians and Tartars.

Salome lived in the monastery for the space of twenty-eight years.

She died a holy death November 17th, 1268.

B., Cunegunde.

THE father of Princess Cunegunde was King Bela IV, of Hungary. Her mother was a daughter of Theodore Lascaris, emperor of Constantinople. She was born about the year 1224.

When grown up, she was asked in marriage by Boleslas V, duke of Cracovia and Sandomir, and afterwards king of Poland. Though her greatest wish always had been to the contrary, she, nevertheless, yielded to the commands of her royal father and consented to the marriage, which took place in 1239.

These two royal personages consecrated their virginity to God by solemn vow which they publicly made in the hands of the bishop of Cracow in the presence of the nobles and the people. In consequence of this Boleslas has been surnamed "The Chaste," while the church has ranked Cunegunde among the number of holy virgins.

Boleslas died in 1279, and Cunegunde at once entered the monastery of S. Clare, which she herself had founded at Sandek. Her words upon entering the monastery are memorable: "I have come to be your servant. Forget what I once have been. Only remember that another lowly handmaid has been added to your Community."

She lived in the monastery for thirteen years and died, July 24th, 1292, full of merits and good works. She was celebrated for numerous miracles, both before and after her death. The veneration paid to her by the people, from time immemorial, was ratified in 1691, by Pope Alexander VIII. The people of Poland and Lithunia had chosen her for their principal Patron. This choice was, likewise, ratified by the Holy See, in 1715.

B. Yolande.

CUNEGUNDE was followed to the cloister by her sister, Yolande, who had been married to another Polish Prince, called Boleslas the Pious. She died June 11th, 1298, and is also honored under the title of Blessed, ratified by the Church.

Influence of the Order.

Thus, the Order spread with marvellous rapidity, throughout all Europe, even during the life-time of S. Clare. A great number of the monasteries were founded directly from San Damiano, and, for that reason, its members were, for a time, called Damianists, to distinguish them from the members of other houses which were only indirectly connected with Assisi.

That the new Order was bound to produce most salutory effects throughout Christendom, is beyond doubt. To see so many devoted souls, even of the highest rank and position in society, leave all things, and embrace a life of voluntary penance and poverty, was a tangible object-lesson to the whole world, not to speak of the countless favors and blessings obtained from God by their fervent prayers and acts of self-denial for poor people in the world, especially in the places themselves where these angels of peace made their abode.

III.

The Holy Rule.

1. *NO WRITTEN RULE AT FIRST.*

S. CLARE and her Religious had no written Rule even when the Order had already began to spread and when a number of monasteries had already been established in different parts. They regulated their lives according to the oral teaching of S. Francis, who was their first guide and instructor in the spiritual life. His admirable lessons concerning holy poverty, absolute self denial, penance, and prayer were treasured up in a special manner by S. Clare, who, on her part, faithfully transmitted them to her spiritual daughters. There was, moreover, the living example of the holy Patriarch and his saintly companions. Special Friars, too, were deputed by S. Francis to give them suitable exhortations from time to time. It was upon these things the Religious of San Damiano modelled their lives; and thus, little by little, a traditional code of rules and regulations was formed to foster and maintain the spirit of the Institute.

S. Clare and the Religious of San Damiano at first directed by the oral teaching of S. Francis.

Whenever any of the Religious of San Damiano were sent abroad to establish new foundations or undertake the government of such as were already in existence, they naturally brought with them the traditions of their Mother-house; and thus the genuine spirit of the new Order was introduced everywhere.

The traditions of San Damiano transmitted to new foundations.

Yet such a state of things would not always do for an Order which was extending so rapidly, especially if the Order was to be transplanted into foreign countries, and to be placed on a permanent footing. A definite written Rule

Necessity of of a written Rule,

became a necessity, Without it, the Order could not continue in existance.

Just about this time, when Francis was needed most to establish the Order of Poor Ladies upon a solid basis, he left Italy, in order to preach the faith to the infidels in Egypt, and, if possible, win the palm of martyrdom. Still, he did not leave the Order without a Father and Protector, but placed it under the direction and authority of Cardinal Ugolino, at that time Bishop of Ostia, and afterwards Pope under the name of Gregory IX., who had always been one of his warmest friends and admirers, and who, therefore, most willingly undertook the charge.

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2. *RULE OF CARDINAL UGOLINO.*

Prohibition of personal and common property the characteristic of Franciscan Poverty.

Although Cardinal Ugolino was a man of eminent learning and piety, and a devoted friend of S. Francis, still, he was not animated with the same enthusiastic love for absolute Poverty as the Holy Patriarch. And yet, if there was anything to characterize the Institutes of S. Francis as something new and distinct from other Religious Orders, it was his idea of the observance of holy Poverty. Hitherto, Orders and Communities, had never been prohibited from acquiring and holding temporal possessions, whereas he desired his children to be truly poor, not merely individually, but also as a body. Hence they were commanded never to acquire, or hold, possessions of any kind, and to have no fixed income, or revenue, in any shape or form. The very houses in which they dwelt were to be owned by others so that they might truly say they were but pilgrims and strangers on the earth. And this absolute Poverty, the foundation and cornerstone of his Order, was to be observed most strictly not only by the Friars of his First Order, but also by the Sisters of his Second Order. S. Clare, who had been well disciplined in the school of S.

Francis, was no less enthusiastic for the observance and love of absolute Poverty, than S. Francis, and, upon all occasions, inculcated the same upon her spiritual daughters.

Francis' ideal considered too severe by Cardinal Ugolino for cloistered women.

Cardinal Ugolino was fully aware of the high ideals of both S. Francis and S. Clare on the subject of holy Poverty. Yet, when he set to work to draw up for the Sisters a permanent Rule of life, he considered the total renunciation of property too difficult a matter for their observance. If, at times, it was even hard for the Brethren, who were at some liberty to move about, he considered it—humanly speaking—almost impossible for women who were entirely shut up in the cloister. Hence he conferred upon this subject with the Sovereign Pontiff, and, with his sanction drew up a Rule, which, according to his idea, would fully answer the purpose.

Rule of Ugolino while severe in other respects, permits personal property.

He took as basis for the new Rule that of S. Benedict; and while retaining its most salient and principal features, he added certain regulations of surprising severity, which obliged the Sisters to practice even greater austerity than S. Francis himself had imposed upon them. They were to keep a perpetual fast, abstaining from cooked food every Wednesday and Friday and during Lent and Advent, fasting on bread and water, four times a week. Their bed was to consist of a mere plank; a little straw was allowed as an indulgence. The law of silence, too, was absolute and perpetual. Yet on the score of poverty, while, personally, they were obliged to be most poor in everything, the Communities were freely allowed to hold property in common.

S. Clare begs to be allowed to retain the practice of absolute poverty.

Knowing the wonderful love of S. Clare for holy Poverty, no one need be surprised that she was sorely disappointed with the Rule of Cardinal Ugolino. She most gladly and even gratefully accepted the injunctions as to penance and mortification; but as regards the observance of Poverty, she begged to be allowed, as a special privilege, to retain their original practice of possessing nothing, either individually, or in common. Her wish was granted in favor of the Monas-

tery of San Damiano and a few other Monasteries within the near vicinity; whereas in all the other Houses of the Order the new Rule was introduced together with its mitigations regarding Poverty,

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3. THE RULE GIVEN BY S. FRANCIS NOW COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE FIRST RULE OF S. CLARE.

Clare entreats Francis to draw up a Rule based on absolute Poverty.

As soon as S. Francis returned from Egypt, he was sent for by S. Clare, who informed him of what had taken place in his absence, and then besought him, with tears in her eyes, to use his personal influence that a proper Rule should be given them to secure forever the priceless treasure of Most High Poverty, so dear to himself, and so anxiously coveted by his true children. Had he not given the Brethren of his First Order a fixed Rule, based on absolute Poverty? Were the Sisters of the Second Order less his children? Why not do for these what he had done for others? But S. Francis needed no urging on this point. The very quintessence of the new Order was threatened with destruction. All his toils and labors, to establish the Order of Poor Ladies upon the solid foundation of absolute Poverty; seemed to be on the point of being frustrated. The love and zeal manifested by his spiritual daughter S. Clare and the other Sisters of San Damiano, in the cause of holy Poverty, filled him with courage and consolation. The work was not entirely lost. The Order could still be saved. In fact, it had to be saved.

Francis draws up the new Rule with the advice and sanction of Cardinal Ugolino.

Therefore, without any further delay, S. Francis went, at once, in search of Cardinal Ugolino, and spoke to him of the sublimity, excellence and advantages of Most High Poverty with such ardor and devotion that he succeeded in completely gaining over the Cardinal to his views and ideas. He then informed the Cardinal that he intended to draw up for the Sisters a Rule, similar, as far as possible, to that

which he had given to the Brethren of his First Order, so that the Brothers, together with the Sisters, might, in reality, form but one compact Order, based on the same solid foundation of absolute Poverty. Ugolino consented; and it was not long before S. Francis had completed his important task, with the aid, and under the direction, of his friend, the Cardinal. This took place in the year 1224.

The new Rule welcomed by the Sisters of San Damiano and a number of other Monastaries.

We may well imagine, with what joy and fervor of spirit, S. Clare and her companions accepted the new Rule, given them by their holy Founder and Patriarch, and with what fidelity and exactitude they put it into practice. S. Clare made a number of copies of the Holy Rule with her own hand and sent them to other monasteries where the same spirit of holy Poverty prevailed as at San Damiano.

The Rule promulgated by S. Clare in her own name after the death of S. Francis.

After the death of S. Francis (1226), S. Clare made a few verbal alterations in the Rule, such as giving S. Francis, whenever he is mentioned by name, the title of Saint, or Blessed, and also inserting two of his letters addressed to his beloved daughters at San Damiano. She thus made the Rule, as far as she could, her own, and directed it to her Religious in her own name and authority.

The Rule solemnly approved by the Sovereign Pontiff only a few days before the death of S. Clare.

But the one great desire of Clare was to obtain the solemn approbation of the Rule by the Holy See. When Cardinal Ugolino became Pope (in 1227) under the name of Gregory IX., he sanctioned and confirmed the Rule by word of mouth. But this did not satisfy S. Clare. She wanted to have the Rule approved and sanctioned in such a way that no man should ever be able to gainsay or question its authority. A long time however, passed before the great object of her earnest desires, and doubtless, too, of her most fervent prayers and severe penances, was granted. There seemed to be a struggle going on between the heroic love of S. Clare and her daughters for holy Poverty, on the one hand, and the prudent reserve of the Holy See, on the other hand, hesitating to give solemn sanction to a Rule based upon the

total renunciation of all things. Yet, at length, the patient waiting and ardent longing of the Saint was fully rewarded. In 1252, Cardinal Raynold, Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, Protector of the Order, and afterwards Pope under the title of Alexander IV., formally approved the Rule in the name, and by the authority, of the Sovereign Pontiff. And to crown all her desires, the Sovereign Pontiff, Innocent IV., issued a Bull by which he ratified the approbation of the Rule by Cardinal Raynold and thus put the solemn seal of the Church's sanction upon the Rule of the new Order. This took place August 9th, 1253, just three days before the blessed death of the Saint, and twenty-nine years after the first compilation of the Rule by S. Francis. Thus S. Clare, before departing hence, had the great happiness of seeing her Order established upon a solid foundation and of having procured for her children the inestimable treasure of Most High Poverty, so that, in the words of aged Simeon, she could cry out in all joy and serenity of soul: "Now Thou doest dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."[1]

4. *SYNOPSIS OF THE RULE.*

The Rule is prefaced by the Bull of Pope Innocent IV., and the approbation of Cardinal Raynold.

Bull of Pope Innocent IV. incorporating the letter of Cardonal Raynold.

"*Innocent, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, to his well-beloved daughter in Jesus Christ, Clare, Abbess, and the other Sisters of the Monastery of San Damiano at Assisi, Health and Apostolic Benediction.*

"The Apostolic See is accustomed to condescend to the pious requests, and to listen, with benevolent favor, to the holy desires of those who address themselves to it. Therefore, as We have been humbly entreated in your name to confirm by Our Apostolical authority the Form of Life, according to which you ought to live together in unity of

[1] Luke II. 29-30.

spirit, and in the profession of the most sublime poverty:—which Rule was given you by S. Francis, and voluntarily embraced by you; and which our Venerable Brother, the Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, has thought good to approve, as is more amply contained in the letters written by himself:—We, acceding to your devout petitions, ratifying and agreeing to all that has been done in this matter by the said Bishop, confirm it by the authority of Our Office, and fortify it by the protection of the present writing, inserting the tenor of the said letters, word by word, in these present letters, as follows:

"Raynold, by the grace of God, Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, to his most dear Mother and Daughter in Jesus Christ, Clare, Abbess of San Damiano at Assisi, and to her Sisters, both present and to come, health and paternal benediction.

"Whereas, Beloved Daughters in Jesus Christ, you have despised the pomps and the delights of the world, and, following the footsteps of Jesus Christ and His Most Holy Mother, have chosen to dwell in enclosure, and to practice the most extreme poverty, that, with liberty of mind, you may give your service to the Lord; we, commending in the Lord your holy resolution, with paternal affection, most willingly grant to your petitions and pious desires our favor and benevolent protection. Wherefore, moved by your earnest entreaties, we, by the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, and of our own, confirm in perpetuity, and fortify by the protection of this present writing, both for you, and for all those who shall succeed you in your monastery, the Form of Life and Rule of Holy Union and Most Sublime Poverty, which your Blessed Father Saint Francis has, both by word and by writing, given you to observe, and which is as follows:

Then follows the text of the Rule, as given by S. Francis, and re-written by S. Clare. Instead of inserting the entire text, it will suffice to give a brief summary of the twelve chapters.

Summary of the twelve Chapters of the Rule.

The Rule of the Order of Poor Ladies is composed of twelve chapters, just as the Rule given by S. Francis to the Brethren, and is expressed almost literally in the same terms as far as it could be done.

In the first chapter of the Rule, Clare promises, both in her own name, and in the name of her sisters, obedience to the Holy See, and to S. Francis and his successors, while the sisters promise obedience to Sister Clare and her successors.

The second chapter treats of the reception of candidates. They must be well grounded in the Catholic faith and free from all impediments. The novitiate lasts one year. All must wear poor garments.

The third chapter directs the Sisters to say the Divine Office, and points out the days of fasting, and the number of times they must go to confession and holy communion.

The fourth chapter speaks of the election and of the office of the Mother Abbess, and the appointment of the other officials of the community.

In the fifth chapter, the law of silence is explained and enforced, as also the manner in which the Sisters are allowed to converse with visitors in the parlor, or at the grill.

The sixth chapter enjoins the observance of absolute poverty, that is "not to receive, or to have, any possession, or property, or anything whatsoever that can reasonably be called property, either by themselves, or through the medium of others."

In this chapter, S. Clare incorporates two letters written by S. Francis to his spiritual daughter at San Damiano.

In the first letter, he promises to take special care of them, both by himself and by his Order.

"Since by the Divine inspiration, you have made yourselves daughters and hand-maids of the Most High and Sovereign King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Ghost for your spouse, choosing to live according to the Holy Gospel, I will, and I promise, to have always, by myself, and by my brethren, a diligent care, and special solicitude, for you as for them.

In the second letter, he exhorts them to the observance of poverty:

"I, Brother Francis, who am poor and little, will follow the life and poverty of our Most Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, and of His Most Holy Mother, and will persevere in the same to the end. And I beseech you all, my Ladies, and counsel you, to abide always in this most holy life and poverty. And take care that you never depart from it through the teaching or counsel of anyone."

The seventh chapter lays down regulations concerning manual labor.

The eighth chapter inculcates the observance of Most Holy Poverty by each individual member; and commands that the sick shall be attended to with all possible care and solicitude.

The ninth chapter speaks of the penances to be imposed for public and notable transgressions.

The tenth chapter points out the mutual relations existing between the Abbess and her subjects; and mentions certain vices to be avoided, and virtues to be practiced, especially charity.

The eleventh chapter explains the duties of the Portress.

The twelfth, and last chapter, directs the canonical visitation to be held once a year, and a chaplain to be appointed for the needs of the community. And as, in the beginning of the Rule, special mention is made of the loyal submission and obedience of the whole Order to the Holy See, so, in conclusion, the Order is bound "to have always for governor, protector, and corrector, the same Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church who shall be appointed by the Sovereign-Pontiff for the Friars Minor, so that, being always subject and submissive at the feet of the same Holy Roman Church, they may always observe the poverty and humility of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of His Most Holy Mother."

Thus ends the Rule itself. Then follows the conclusion of Cardinal Raynolds' approbation:

Conclusion of the Papal Bull.

"Given at Perugia, September 16th, 1252, in the tenth year of the Pontificate of our Holy Father, Pope Innocent IV."

This paragraph is succeeded by the conclusion of the Papal Bull of confirmation:

"Wherefore, let no one violate this Our Bull of confirmation, or presume to act in opposition to it. If anyone should dare to do so, let him know that he incurs the anger of Almighty God, and of the Holy Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul.

"Given at Assisi, August 9th, in the eleventh year of Our Pontificate."

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5. *THE PRIVILEGE OF MOST HIGH POVERTY.*

A singular Privilege.

The Privilege called "the Privilege of Most High Poverty," is the most singular privilege ever asked for, and obtained, from the Holy See. Wishing to secure for the Order in perpetuity the observance of the most absolute Poverty, and fearing least, at any time, the Sisters might yield to the entreaties of persons in authority to accept temporal possessions, S. Clare petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff to ratify their total renunciation of all earthly things in such a way that they could, at no time, be compelled, by any person whomsoever, to accept and hold temporal possessions. Such is the meaning of the Privilege of Most High Poverty, a strange and singular privilege no doubt, but one which is another instance of the wonderful love and zeal of S. Clare for the virtue of Most High Poverty.

The document was issued by Pope Gregory IX., October 18th, 1228. The original is still preserved in the monastery of S. Clare at Assisi.

Pope Gregory (formerly Cardinal Ugolino) was thoroughly convinced of the genuine love of S. Clare and her companions for holy poverty. He was perfectly sure that they personally would never deviate from the rigorous observance of absolute poverty. But when he was asked to give his solemn and pontifical approval in perpetuity to a Rule which had for its foundation this absolute Poverty, the prudent Pontiff hesitated. He believed it to be hardly possible that such an Order could always exist. Dangerous

times were sure to come when it would be impossible to rely on the charity of the faithful alone. He, therefore, begged of S. Clare to provide for such emergencies, by accepting some revenues which he promised to provide out of his own means. S. Clare gently, but firmly, refused. The Pope, admiring her zeal and constancy, yielded and approved the Rule by word of mouth. Yet Clare wanted something more tangible. In order to preclude the possibility of any future attempts on the part of persons in authority to press upon the Sisters the acceptance of temporal possessions or revenues, she entreated the Sovereign Pontiff to issue a solemn Decree to that effect. To this petition also the Pope yielded and, upon his return to Perugia, issued a document usually termed "the Privilege of Most High Poverty."

Solution of a difficulty concerning this Privilege.

But there is a difficulty connected with this privilege which only recent researches have cleared up satisfactorily. In Chapter II. of the Biography it is stated clearly that it was of Pope Innocent IV. that S. Clare demanded the Privilege of Most High Poverty, and that this Pope was so moved at hearing such an unwonted petition that he wrote the first words of the document with his own hand. In the same place mention is also made of Pope Gregory IX. as having offered S. Clare certain revenues for her monastery which she refused. But nothing else is stated. For this reason some authors have attributed the Privilege to Pope Innocent IV. and state that it was granted about the same time that he solemnly approved the Rule, that is, just before the death of S. Clare, and that the initial words were in his own handwriting. But there is no document in existence which proves any of these assertions. The petition of S. Clare to Pope Innocent IV. evidently refers to the solemn approval of the Rule. For the expression "Privilege of Most High or Perpetual Poverty" equally expresses the whole Rule as well as this privilege taken singly. And it is precisely this loose way of expression which has led to the difficulty. In

fact, in Chapter VI. it is related that when S. Clare was dying, she was visited by Cardinal Raynold, and that she begged of him to obtain from the Lord Pope and the Cardinals the confirmation of the Privilege of Poverty, which clearly means the solemn approbation of the Rule which up to that date had no other authority but the verbal approbation of Pope Gregory. Cardinal Raynold promised to do all he could. Hence it was that he issued a formal approbation of the Rule in the name and by the authority of Pope Innocent. When the year following the whole papal court moved from Perugia to Assisi, the Pope hastened to call personally upon S. Clare. It was on this occasion that S. Clare entreated Pope Innocent to confirm the Rule with his own Apostolic sanction. This was done, and in a short time the Papal Bull was duly executed. When Pope Innocent visited S. Clare a second time and personally handed over to her the Bull of confirmation, she was even then not yet fully satisfied, but begged the Pope to affix his approbation in his own handwriting. This also was done, and it is related that the Pope was moved to tears at seeing the wonderful love and zeal of the dying Saint for Most Holy Poverty. But where is the personal handwriting of the Pope? Many authors usually state that the initial words of this Bull were penned by the Pope himself. But there is no trace of this in the original document still preserved at Assisi, every word of the Bull being in the same handwriting. The difficulty has at last been solved by a recent discovery made by an expert[1] who upon carefully examining the original Bull of confirmation preserved at Assisi, found these words traced on the upper margin of the parchment: "*Ad instar fiat. S.*"; and a little further on: "*Ex causis manifestis mihi et protectori fiat ad instar.*" A literal translation of these words

(1) Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi, Sud-Librarian of the H. R. Church, who published an account of this discovery, together with other interesting items concerning S. Clare, in a pamphlet, dated 1895.

would not, however, avail much to give us a correct idea of the latin phrase. The words *"ad instar fiat"*, or simply *"fiat"*, followed by the initial letter of the Pope's proper name, was the usual way of countersigning important documents and thus formally putting them into execution, as may still be seen on a number of authentic documents preserved in the pontificial archives. The initial letter S. stands for Sinibaldi which was Pope Gregory's baptisimal name. *Fiat,* or *ad instar fiat,* therefore means: Let it be done; or let it be done as is here written. And since the Bull contained likewise the approbation of Cardinal Raynold, Protector of the Order, mention of him is made also. This explains a difficulty which has so long puzzled biographers of the Saint and which led to so many erroneous statements.

Text of the Privilege.

The text of the privilege of Most High Poverty is as follows:

GREGORY, BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

To Clare, his beloved daughter in Jesus Christ, and to the other Sisters of the Monastery of San Damiano, at Assisi, who have made, and who may, hereafter, make profession of the Religious life.

HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

All the faithful are aware, that, in order to consecrate yourselves to God alone, you have renounced all desire of temporal things, and that, selling all that you had and giving the price to the poor, you have formed the generous resolution of never possessing any property, nor fixed revenues of any kind. Thus you walk in the footsteps of our Divine Master, who, being rich, made Himself poor for us, and who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life."[1]

Never allow yourselves, then, to be discouraged in your holy purpose, either by the necessities which you may suffer, or by the wants of earthly goods; for the powerful hand of your heavenly Spouse is always under your head, to sus-

[1] John, XIV, 6.

tain the weakness of that flesh which you have subjected to the law of the spirit with a great fervor of charity. The same Lord, who by His Providence, daily nourishes and preserves the birds of the air, and who has clothed the earth with verdure and flowers, will know how to provide you with food and clothing, until the day on which He will give Himself to you for your eternal food, when with His victorious right hand, He will embrace you in His glory and happiness.

As, then, you have humbly requested Us to confirm, by Our apostolic authority, the resolution you have made of practicing the most absolute poverty, We willingly grant to you, by the authority of these present letters, that you cannot be compelled by anyone whomsoever to possess anything.

If anyone among you cannot, or will not subject herself to this absolute renunciation, We command that she shall not remain with you, but shall, at once, be transferred to another house. We will, moreover, that no person shall be permitted to trouble you in your monastery with any vexation whatsoever; and that, if anyone, either ecclesiastic or lay-person, who is duly notified of these presents, shall rashly dare to act in opposition thereto, and will not amend after the three usual admonitions, neither make satisfaction in proportion to his delinquencies, he shall be *by that very fact*, deprived of all offices and dignities, and shall be considered as condemned by God Himself, on account of his perversity, and be separated from the Most Holy Body and Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, on the last Day, will avenge the injury done to His spouses.

But, on the contrary, to you all, and to all who shall love your monastery, be peace and benediction in the Lord! May you receive, in this world, the reward of your good works, and, on the day of judgment, the recompense of eternal life!

Given at Perugia, October 18th, in the second year of Our Pontificate.

[1] *i. e.*, 1228.

IV.

A few Incidents from the Life of S. Francis

In Relation to S. Clare, not Mentioned in the Biography.

1. *FRANCIS CONSULTS CLARE TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD.*

Great perplexity of S. Francis.

FRANCIS, the great teacher and guide of souls, was himself, upon one occasion, reduced to a state of great perplexity of mind, which caused him much uneasiness. It happened shortly after he had given S. Clare and her daughters the new Rule and thus established their Order upon a solid basis, when he himself began to be troubled by doubts concerning the particular work God wished him to do. On the one hand, he felt greatly drawn to the purely contemplative life; yet he knew, on the other hand, that the divinest work on earth was the salvation of souls. This is how he proposes his difficulty to his brethren, whom he assembled together for the purpose of hearing their council:

"I have a great doubt, my beloved Brethren, which I wish to propose to you, that you may solve it with the help of God. What do you advise me, my Brethren? Which do you consider better, that I should give myself to prayer, or that I should go and preach? I am a simple man, unskillful in speech, and methinks I have received the gift of prayer rather than that of preaching. In prayer, there is more profit and a greater abundance of grace; in preaching, we merely distribute to others the gifts we ourselves have received. Prayer purifies the heart and its affections, it forms a union with the one true and sovereign good, and gives solidity and vigor to virtue; preaching makes the feet of even a spiritual man dusty; it is a work which distracts and dissipates, and leads to relaxation of discipline. In short, in prayer, we speak to God and listen to Him; we converse with the Angels, leading ourselves an angelic life; whereas in preaching, we must use much condescension towards men, and, living amongst men, it is necessary to see, hear, think,

and speak after the fashion of men. These appear to be serious objections. But, on the other hand, there is one thing which before God, seems to outweigh all these advantages. It is this, that the Only-Begotten Son of God, Who is the Infinite Wisdom, left the Bosom of His Father to save souls, to teach men by His example and by His word, to redeem, cleanse and nourish them with His Most Precious Blood, reserving nothing for Himself, but giving all He had for our salvation. Now it is our duty to act in everything according to the Model shown in His Person. Therefore, it seems to me more in conformity with the Divine Will, that I should renounce a tranquil life and that I should go and work abroad. Once more, therefore, I ask you what is your advice. Tell me which it is I should do."

Then he sent two of his Religious, Philip and Masseo, to Brother Sylvester, who was then living in a retired spot on the heighs of Mount Subasio, and, likewise, to the venerable Virgin S. Clare, begging them to consult God concerning the anxiety which had taken hold of him and make known to him God's holy will.

S. Clare was struck with wonder and admiration at the great humility of her spiritual guide and would in no wise have yielded to his request, except out of obedience to his command; for she deemed herself utterly unworthy to become, in God's hands, a means of communicating His Divine will to one whom she kew to be by far her superior.

Brother Sylvester and S. Clare, being consulted, receive the same answer in prayer.

The two messengers returned. Both Sylvester and Clare had received the same answer in prayer. It was God's will that Francis should quit his solitude, and go forth to annouce the Gospel. He received their message on his knees; and, at once, set about to put it into execution.

2. *FRANCIS' PERSONAL RELATION WITH S. CLARE AND THE COMMUNITY OF SAN DAMIANO.*

Since Francis had been instrumental in the hands of God in leading Clare and her companions to the cloister, he considered it his personal duty to guide and instruct them in the

new life of evangelical poverty and perfection. This he did, not only by word of mouth, but also by the powerful influence of his personal example. When, however, he considered the Sisters to be sufficiently well instructed and firmly rooted in the spiritual life, he began to withdraw himself, little by little. His visits at San Damiano became less frequent, and, at length, he would call upon them only occasionally. Still, he did not neglect them, on that account. In fact, he solemnly engaged himself always to take care of them, either by himself, or by his Brethren. For this purpose, several Friars were assigned for the Community of San Damiano, to administer to their spiritual needs, and also to assist them in their temporal necessities.

Francis' prudent reserve in his visits at San Damiano.

That Francis entertained a special love and esteem for the holy Virgin S. Clare and her spiritual daughters at San Damiano, is self-evident. Yet his visits at the Monastery were prompted only by motives of pure charity, and regulated by the greatest prudence and discretion, lest human motives should, in any way, mar the spiritual relationship between them.

Francis teaches a lesson on this subject.

It is related that when, after an unusually long absence, he once more presented himself at San Damiano to edify and comfort the Sisters by a salutary exhortation, he noticed in their outward behavior evident signs of the joy and consolation they felt at seeing once more the face of their beloved father and master. This would seem to be perfectly natural. Yet Francis thought they deserved a lesson. He, therefore, went to kneel before the altar and began to pray silently. After a little while, he ordered ashes to be brought to him. Having strewn the ashes in a circle upon the ground, he knelt within the centre, and again began to pray without saying a word. The joy which the Sisters had, at first, experienced, soon yielded to fear and trembling. Francis remained on his knees for some time. He then arose and turning towards the Sisters, he said to them: "Let us all

kneel down and recite the Psalm *"Miserere."* And kneeling down again, he intoned the Psalm in a tone of deep sorrow and compunction. When the Psalm was completed, he arose, and left the Monastery, without seeing anyone.

By this conduct, Francis gave the Sisters to understand, that, whatever they might see in him, he was, after all, nothing but a sinful man and a handful of dust and ashes, and that God alone is the source of true joy and consolation.

This prudent reserve was a rule which Francis not only laid down for his own personal conduct, but also wished to be adopted by the Brethren to whom he often spoke on this subject.

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3. *LAST VISIT OF S. FRANCIS AT SAN DAMIANO.*

Francis not unreasonable in his reserve.

THOUGH Francis was most reserved and even severe in his dealings with the Sisters of San Damiano, still he was not unreasonable in granting them some indulgence, especially when entreated to do so by others. For he was always more ready to act upon the advice and entreaty of others than to follow his own impulse and inclinations. It was for this reason that he yielded to Clare's request of breaking bread with him, which took place at our Lady of the Angels, as has been narrated in the biography.

Francis accepts the kind services of S. Clare to alleviate the sufferings arising from the sacred stigmata.

When, two years before his blessed death, Francis was favored by our Lord to receive the living Imprints of the Five Wounds of our Divine Savior, and when in consequence thereof, he was subjected to intense sufferings, he allowed S. Clare to have the consolation of preparing for him a dressing, or plaster, spread upon linen cloths, to ease the pain arising from the wound in his side, and to absorb the blood, issuing from it. One of these plasters, stained with the Saint's blood, securely fastened in a wooden box by a wire

screen, is preserved among the relics of the Monastery of Poor Clares at Assisi.

Francis likewise accepted a pair of sandals, or slippers, wrought by S. Clare in such a way as to enable the Saint to walk without having to suffer so much on account of the nails which pierced his feet, and the points of which protruded underneath from the souls of his feet so that he could not stand upright without intense pain.

Francis attended by S. Clare and her daughters during his last sickness.

When, at length, Francis knew that his end was not far off, he once more yielded to the entreaties of his spiritual children and allowed himself to be taken to San Damiano. Some poor dwelling was procured for him close by and here he was tended by Brothers Leo, Masseo, Ruffino, and Angelo. As to Clare and her Sisters, it afforded them great consolation to perform for him all such little services as lay within their power which S. Francis accepted most gratefully.

Francis remained at this place for about forty days, from the end of July to the beginning of September (1225). During this time, his conferences with his spiritual daughters were frequent.

Francis imparts to Clare a heavenly consolation received during his sickness.

At times, the sufferings of the dying Patriarch were so intense that he was compelled to pray long and earnestly for grace to endure them patiently. One day, when the pains he had to bear were unusually severe, an interior voice thus spoke to him: "Francis, who can estimate that which will purchase a Kingdom that is beyond all price? Know, then, that the sufferings you endure are of more value than all the riches of the world, so that you should not part with them for the whole universe, even if all the mountains were changed into pure gold, its stones into jewels and its oceans into precious balm." "Yea, Lord," replied the Saint, "it is even thus that I value the afflictions You have sent me. For I know it is Your Holy Will that, by them I should now be purified from my sins, so that, hereafter, I may enjoy Your Mercy for all eternity." "Then rejoice," said the heavenly voice,

"for this is the road upon which you will enter into Paradise." At these words, the Saint was ravished into a most delightful ecstacy. Coming to himself, he thought of S. Clare, who, just then, was also enduring great bodily pain, and sent for her, so that he might communicate to her what he had heard and give her a share in the heavenly consolation he had experienced.

Letters addressed by S. Francis to S. Clare shortly before his death.

This was probably their last interview on earth; for a few days later, he had himself taken back to our Lady of the Angels, a spot dear to him above all others. And as here, under the shadow of the Blessed Mother of God, he had commenced his religious career and founded his two great Orders, so it was here also that he wished to spend his last days on earth and take his flight to heaven. But even then he did not forget his spiritual daughters at San Damiano. Not being able to console them any longer by his personal presence and by word of mouth, he dictated several letters to be sent to them for their spiritual comfort and encouragement. Two of these were inserted by S. Clare in the Rule given by S. Francis, as has already been mentioned elsewhere. Others were lost. There are fragments of a long letter he dictated shortly before his death by which he encouraged the Sisters to endeavor to become more perfect each day in the exercise of virtue, to bear their own bodily infirmities and sufferings most patiently and bestow the tenderest care upon those in suffering, to be discreet in the practice of bodily mortification, attending more to internal self-denial which cannot injure the health of the body, to be grateful for the alms received and use them discreetly; above all things, to love and assist each other in all sweetness and charity, and confide wholly in God. At the conclusion, he promised to see them again in a few days, adding, however, that they must not desire this, but leave it entirely to the good will of God.

They did see him again shortly; but it was only to gaze

upon his sacred remains as they were being borne to their last resting place.

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4. S. CLARE AND HER SISTERS VENERATE THE SACRED REMAINS OF S. FRANCIS.

Funeral cortege of S. Francis passes San Damiano at the request of S. Clare

FRANCIS was dead. His blessed soul departed from his body on Saturday, October 3d, 1226, about an hour after sunset. Next day, Sunday, October 4th, his sacred remains were carried to the Church of S. George within the city of Assisi, where it was deposited with due honor and solemnity.

S. Clare and the Sisters had asked as a special favor to be allowed to gaze once more upon the features of their beloved Father. Their request was granted. The funeral procession did not, therefore, take the direct road to the city, but followed a by-path by which it would pass the Church of San Damiano. Here the procession stopped, and the body was carried into the little Church and placed upon a bier in front of the grille, or window, which opens into the choir of the Religious, and through which Holy Communion was administered to them. Meanwhile, the Sisters had assembled in the choir and now thronged around the opening, eager to cast a farewell look upon the precious remains of the Holy Patriarch and venerate the Sacred Stigmata which were now exposed to full view.

S. Clare, being ill, had herself carried to the choir. She devoutly kissed the sacred wound in his right hand which lay close to the opening. She even attempted to pull out the miraculous nail which was perfectly movable; but, seeing she could not succeed, she contented herself with saturating a piece of linen with the blood that flowed from the wound, to preserve it as a most precious relic.[1] She also took an

[1] Still kept among the other treasures in the Church of S. Clare, Assisi.

exact measure of the body to serve as a guide for the painting of a life-size picture of the Saint, intended for the choir.

Who can describe the emotion of S. Clare and the Sisters on that occasion! Here they beheld, for the last time, the countenance of their beloved Guide and Father. With awe and reverence, they saw and touched the five wounds in his body. For the habit which clothed the Saint's body had been cut open so as to exhibit the wound in his side; and the nails and wounds in his hands and feet were plainly visible. This was perhaps the fulfillment of his promise when, in his last letter, he had sent word to them that he would see them again in a few days. They now saw him again; yet alas! it was for the last time. On this earth, they would never gaze upon him again. Their hearts were divided between grief and joy; grief, at being bereft of his visible presence; joy, on account of the knowledge that he had entered upon the heavenly reward and was now reigning with the Saints in glory.[1]

Their lamentations.

But when the body of S. Francis was lifted up again by the bearers to be carried forth, and when the door closed upon it, sadness and sorrow reigned, for a while, uppermost in the hearts of the Sisters. And while the crowds without renewed their triumphant strains of joyous psalms and canticles, the poor Sisters could contain themselves no longer, but burst forth into loud lamentations amidst bitter sighs and abundant tears. No orphan ever bewailed the loss of an affectionate mother, as they mourned over the death of their beloved Father. It was a veritable litany of lamentations that broke forth from their sorrow-stricken hearts:

"O Father! what are we to do? To whom, O Father! do you now entrust us in this misery and desolation?

[1] This touching scene is beautifully represented in one of the famous frescoes painted by Giotto in the upper Church of the Basilica of S. Francis at Assisi.

"Who will, henceforth, counsel us in our trials? Who sustain us in our temptations?

"Alas! dark is the day, full of bitterness and sadness; for the light, that illumined our way, has departed; and the shadow of night has fallen upon us.

"Why have you left us! dear Father? Verily, now are we forlorn and desolate, entombed in this dreary prison.

"O! how happy we were while we had you in our midst! The Poverty, you taught us, we deemed more precious than all the riches of the world. Oh! how full of sweetness you were towards us, O most loving Father!

"O bitter loss! Death is now more desirable than life. With you, all happiness has departed from us.

"O God! why has Thou bereft us of our strength? Good Jesus! our grief is more piercing than death.

"O Francis! dear Father! why did you not send us before you. O! how happy we should have been! Why did we not die along with you?

"O Beloved Master! They have taken you from us. The doors have closed. We are overwhelmed with grief.

"You have gone, dear Father! Never again shall we behold you on this earth as heretofore.

"O bitter separation! O untolerable absence!

"O dreadful death! bringing death to thousands.

"O Father! when, O when, shall we see you again?"

* * * * * *

Let no man be surprised at seeing the Sisters give way to such wailing and lamenting. It is but another argument to prove that the Religious Life does not crush or stifle the voice of nature, but respects and ennobles all that is true and good in nature. What can be more natural than to grieve over the loss of a dear friend or a beloved parent?

Did not Christ Himself, the Divine Model of Perfection, shed tears at the grave of His friend Lazarus?

Yet while Religion recognizes and hallows the tears of sorrow, it also imparts strength to bear the loss with fortitude and adds sweet consolation by the firm assurance of a happy future.

Then dry up your tears, dear Sisters. Cease to mourn and lament. Persevere courageously in the path traced out for you by your Seraphic Father. Soon will the night of sorrow pass; and soon will the day of eternal joy dawn upon you. In a few days, you shall meet your Father again. Then shall your joy be full, and that joy no man shall take from you forever.

V.

Documents.

1. *LETTERS OF UGOLINO TO S. CLARE.*

Cardinal Ugolino a special friend of S. Clare.

CARDINAL UGOLINO, who had ever been a most devoted friend and adviser of the holy Patriarch, and protector of his Order, also took the warmest interest in the welfare of the community of San Damiano and the establishment of the Order of Poor Ladies. In regard to S. Clare herself, he always entertained towards her the highest esteem and loved her with truly paternal affection. Nothing delighted him more than to converse with her on spiritual subjects. He would, therefore, visit her whenever an optunity presented itself. Upon one occasion, being called away from Assisi rather suddenly, to attend to some important matters, he sent S. Clare the following letter, which plainly shows the deep regard he had for the Saint.

Letters of Ugolino while Cardinal.

"Ugolino, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, notwithstanding his unworthiness, humbly recommends himself to his dear Sister, and Mother, in Jesus Christ, the Venerable Clare, the Handmaid of the Son of God.

"My dear Sister in Jesus Christ.

"Since pressing and important business has obliged me to be absent from your saintly abode, and has deprived me of your gentle words and pious conversation a deep sadness has filled my soul. Scarcely had I left your Monastery, when I felt myself oppreessed by a great melancholy. Proceeding on my way I could not restrain my tears, and had I not prayed for fortitude, I should not have been able to attend to my business. What had become of that great joy which I experienced, when together with you and the other Sisters, we celebrated the solemnities of Easter and conversed of the infinite love of God in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the

Eucharist? Alas! my soul is a prey to severe desolation, even as Jesus experienced special anguish on the cross, when separated from His Beloved Disciples. I know that I am a great sinner, but I felt this still more when I considered your sublime privileges, your holiness of life and the austerity of your Rule. Yes, I have offended God, even so, as to merit no longer, the favor of conversing with his chosen hand-maids, and of being edified by the splendor of their virtues.

"And yet, my dear Sister, it is these virtues which now reassure me. The pious tears and the humble prayers which you and your daughters will offer up for me will obtain the mercy I need. Therefore, I commit my soul to your keeping, so that you may interest yourself on behalf of my eternal salvation; for I am convinced that, by the fervor of your sighs and the abundance of your tears, you will easily obtain whatever you ask for.

"His Holiness the Pope will soon visit Assisi, and I expect to follow him shortly.

"Salute for me, with all affection, my dear Sister, the Virgin Agnes, and all my dear Sisters in Jesus Christ.

"The Peace and Mercy of the Lord be with you."

No date is given. But since special reference is made to S. Agnes, the letter must have been written before her departure to Florence, and hence at an early period of the history of San Damiano.

Letters of Ugolino while Pope.

Another letter of Ugolino's is extant which was written by him after his elevation to the Chair of S. Peter under the name of Gregory IX., and which proves that his love and admiration for the Saint ever remained unaltered. The letter is as follows:—

"Gregory, to his dear Daughter, in Jesus Christ, the Abbess Clare, and to the other Cloistered Religious of the Monastery of San Damiano at Assisi, Health and Benediction.

"Blessed for ever be the Most High God, to whom you have consecrated yourselves as lowly hand-maids, and Who, by the Grace of His Divine Spirit, has condescended to adopt you as His Beloved Daughters, to raise you to the sublime dignity of spouses of his only Son, and who awaits to crown you with glory in Heaven. You, more than all

others, are bound to love Jesus Christ with your whole hearts, to serve Him with your whole strength, and to tend towards Him with such ardor that nothing shall be able to separate you from His love. Remember, that, of your own free will, you have followed that Divine voice, which called you to himself; that you have enclosed yourselves in these poor cells, to the end, that being free from the tumult of the world and preserved from the snares of earthly vanity, you may unite yourselves, by a pure and holy love to the Heavenly Bridegroom, Whom you have preferred to all others, until He introduce you into His eternal dwellings.

"Let constant meditations on these holy truths sweeten the bitterness of the trials of life, and change into pleasures the pains which you endure for the love of Jesus, Who, for our sakes, suffered such shame and torment.

"As for Ourselves, We must say, that you are Our joy and consolation in all the cares and anxieties which continually oppress Our heart. We, therefore, beseech you, in Our Lord, and if need be, We command you, in virtue of this Apostolic writing, to be mindful of what We have done for you. Walk in the way of the Spirit, as We have taught you. Endeavor to grow in perfection; forget the things of this world; always desire the better gifts, according to the advice of the Apostle; and ever advance from virtue to virtue. By acting thus, you will give glory to God, and Our own joy will be full, because We love you in Jesus Christ, from the depth of Our soul as children of predilection and Spouses of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as We are fully persuaded of your intimate union with God, We entreat you to be always mindful of Us in your prayers, and to raise your holy hands for Us continually to the Lord, imploring Him to defend Us from the countless dangers which encompass Our Pontificate, to aid Us in Our infirmity and to strengthen Us in virtue: so that, by the faithful discharge of the ministry confided to Us, We may give to God the glory which is due to Him and joy to the Angels, while obtaining grace for Ourselves and for all the children of Holy Church life everlasting.

"Fare you well in the Lord, my dear Sister.

2. *LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF S. CLARE.*

Clare, when dying, dictates her last will and testament.

CLARE survived Francis twenty-seven years. During this time, she was left to her own resources, being bereft of him who had been her Father and Guide. Yet so firmly had the spirit of the holy Patriarch been rooted in her heart, that she was, at all times, the most faithful and intrepid guardian and interpreter of his views and teaching, especially in regard to the priceless treasure of Most High Poverty, bequeathed to her and her Order as a special legacy by the Seraphic Saint. And this treasure she jealously guarded and defended in spite of the many and serious difficulties with which she had to contend. But God singularly rewarded her zeal and fervor by granting her the great consolation to obtain the solemn approbation of the Holy Rule which would ensure in her Order the perpetual observance of Most Holy Poverty. And this same spirit, which had animated her through life, she wished to transmit to her spiritual daughters, and to impress it as a lasting seal upon the entire Order for all time to come. To this end she dictated, when dying, her last will and testament.

In the name of the Lord. Amen.

Spiritual testament of S. Clare.

Amongst the other benefits which we have received, and still receive, each day, from our Father, the dispenser of mercies, there is one for which we owe special thanks. It is our vocation. For our vocation is great. And the greater and the more perfect the gift is, the greater ought to be the thanksgiving we are bound to render Him. Hence the Apostle says: "See your vocation."[1]

"The Son of God became for us the Way which He showed by word and example; and the same has been taught us by our Blessed Father Francis, His true lover and faithful follower. Therefore ought we to consider the immense benefits which God has bestowed upon us, and those in particular which He was pleased to bestow upon us through His

[1] I. Cor., I., 26.

beloved servant, our Blessed Father Francis, not only after our conversion, but even while we were still in the midst of the vanities of the world. For when the Saint had as yet neither Brethren nor companions, being engaged, shortly after his conversion, in repairing the church of San Damiano, he was then overwhelmed with Divine consolation and irresistably moved to quit the world altogether. It was then that, with great joy, and by the light of the Holy Ghost, he uttered in our regard that prophecy which the Lord afterwards fulfilled. For mounting the wall of the said church, he addressed in a loud voice some poor people who happened to be near: "Come and help me in the building of the Monastery of San Damiano; for, one day, there will be in this place Ladies by whose renowned and godly conversation our heavenly Father will be glorified throughout His Holy Church."

"In this, then, may we understand the bountiful goodness of God toward us, since out of the abundance of His mercy and charity, it had pleased Him to speak these words through His Saint concerning our vocation and election; and not only concerning ourselves did the most Blessed Father foretell these things, but also concerning those who were to come after us in the holy vocation to which the Lord called us. With what care, therefore, and with what application of mind and body, should we not keep the commandments of God and the precepts of our Father, so that, with the help of the Lord, we render back unto Him our talent multiplied? For our Lord Himself placed us as a pattern to be a model and mirror not only for people in the world, but for our Sisters also whom the Lord called to follow our vocation, so that they, likewise, should become a model and mirror for all those who live in the world. Since, therefore, the Lord has called us to such great things, that in us those may find a pattern who themselves are set for others as a model and mirror, we are greatly bound to bless and praise God and to be strengthened yet more in the Lord to be engaged in well-doing. Wherefore, if we live in accordance with our Rule, we shall leave others a glorious example, and acquire for ourselves, by our brief labors here below, the reward of everlasting happiness.

"When the most High and heavenly Father, in His grace and mercy, had deigned to enlighten my heart, that, after the example and through the teaching of our most

Blessed Father Francis, I should, shortly after his conversion, do penance, together with a few Sisters whom the Lord had given me, shortly after my conversion: I promised him voluntary obedience, according as the Lord had given us the light of His grace through the praiseworthy life and doctrine of Blessed Francis, and when the Blessed Francis saw that, although we were weak and frail according to the body, we, nevertheless, shunned neither want, nor poverty, nor labor, nor suffering, nor the contempt and scorn of the world, but that, on the contrary, after the example of the Saint and of his own Brethren, we deemed these things our greatest delights—a fact frequently witnessed both by himself and his brethren—he greatly rejoiced in the Lord; and out of his loving regard for us, he bound himself, both personally, and by his Order, to always have the same diligent care and special solicitude for us as for his own Brethren. And thus in submission to the will of God and of our most Blessed Father Francis, we came to the Church of San Damiano, there to take up our permanent abode. Here the Lord, in His grace and mercy, multiplied our number, so that it might be fulfilled that the Lord had foretold through His Saint. (For we had been living in another place, though but for a short time.)

After that the Blessed Father wrote for us a mode of life, and most of all he charged us that we should ever persevere in Holy Poverty. Neither was he content to exhort us, as long as he lived, by numerous discourses, as well as by his example, to the love and practice of most Holy Poverty; but he also delivered unto us many things in writing, lest after his death, we should, in the least, stray from the path of Holy Poverty. For the Son of God, while living in the world, did not wish ever to depart from the path of Holy Poverty; and our Blessed Father Francis, who following in the footsteps of our Lord, had chosen Holy Poverty for himself and for his Brethren, ever practiced and taught the same, and never departed from it as long as he lived.

I, therefore, Clare, the servant—although most unworthy—of Christ and of the poor Sisters, of San Damiano, and a little plant of our Holy Father; considering, along with my other Sisters, our most high profession and the command of so great a Father; and fearing, with them, that the frailty exhibited by others, might also, be found in us, after our

Holy Father S. Francis, should have departed from us—for he had ever been unto us as a pillar of strength, and, after God, our only comfort and support—we bound ourselves again and again, to Holy Poverty so that, after my death, the Sisters, then living and to come, should never depart from it. And as I have ever been most anxious and careful to observe Holy Poverty, which we have promised to God and to our most Blessed Father S. Francis, and caused the same to be observed by them; and as, moreover, I took care, for the sake of greater security, to have our profession of most Holy Poverty, which we promised to our Father, confirmed by special grants of our Lord Pope Innocent and his successors, lest at any time we should depart from the path of Holy Poverty; I now, on my knees, and with the utmost fervor of my whole being, recommend all my Sisters, both present and to come, to our holy mother, the Roman Church, to the Sovereign Pointiff, and especially to my Lord Cardinal, who has charge of the Order of Friars Minor and of us; and him I entreat in a particular manner, for the love of our Lord, the same Who in poverty lay in a manger, Who in poverty lived in this world, and Who in nakedness hung upon the cross, that he could watch over his little flock whom God, our heavenly Father placed in his Holy Church, and cause the Sisters to be mindful of the teaching and example of our blessed Father, Francis, and to copy the humility and poverty of the beloved Son of God and of the glorious Virgin, His mother; and make them observe Holy Poverty which we have promised to God and our most Blessed Father Francis; and ever encourage and support them in the practice of the same.

"And inasmuch as our Lord gave unto us our most Blessed Father Francis; to be our founder and builder, and to aid in the service of Christ; and inasmuch as he himself was most anxious, as long as he lived, to cultivate and tend us, who are his little plants, both by word and example, in those things which we have promised to God and to our Blessed Father; thus do I now recommend and bequeath all my Sisters, present and to come, to the successor of our Blessed Father Francis, and to his entire Order, so that they may assist us ever to advance more securely in the service of God, and, above all, to observe more perfectly Holy Poverty.

"If, however, it should, at any time, happen, that the Sisters have to leave this place, and go to another, they shall, nevertheless, still be bound to observe, after my death, in whatever place they may be, that manner of Holy Poverty, which we have promised to God and to our most Blessed Father Francis, and both she who shall be in office, as well as the other Sisters, shall be careful not to acquire, or receive, at the place to which they go, more land than extreme necessity requires to serve as a garden for the cultivation of vegetables. But if, at any time, it should be needful, on account of some just and reasonable cause, to have more land than is necessary for a garden, they shall not permit to acquire more than extreme necessity demands; and, in that case, this portion of land shall not be cultivated or planted, but shall remain unbroken and untilled.

"I charge and exhort, in our Lord Jesus Christ, all my Sisters, both present and to come, that they strive to walk in the path of holy simplicity, humility, and poverty and to lead holy lives, as, from the very beginning of our conversion unto Christ, we were taught by our Blessed Father Francis, to the end that, through no merits of their own, but solely by the grace and mercy of the Giver of all gifts, the Father of Mercies, their good conduct may be a sweet odor to all both far and near.

"Love one another for the love of Jesus Christ; and let the love that reigns in your hearts, manifest itself in your actions, so that, urged on by each other's example, you may increase in the love of God and in mutual charity.

"I also entreat her who shall be in office to strive to be above the other Sisters more in virtue and holiness than in office, so that the Sisters be moved, by her example, to obey her, not so much from a sense of duty, as from love. Let her be careful and prudent towards her Sisters, as a good mother towards her daughters; and especially in regard to those whom the Lord shall add to our numbers, let her endeavor to provide for them according to each one's particular needs. Let her be kind and courteous so that the Sisters may fearlessly make known to her all their wants and have recourse to her with confidence at all hours, whenever it shall seem expedient to them both on their own account as well as for the sake of other Sisters.

"But as for the Sisters themselves, let them be submis-

sive, bearing in mind that, for the love of God, they have given up their own wills. Hence, I desire that they obey their Mother as they have freely promised the Lord to do. Then the Mother, seeing their charity, humility and concord, will find the burdens of her office easier to bear, and her troubles and sorrows will be turned into joy.

"And since 'Narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life: few there are that find it.'[1] And if there are some who, for a time walk upon that road, few there are who persevere. But blessed are they to whom it is given to walk upon that road and to persevere upon it unto the end. Then let us take heed, lest, having entered upon the way of the Lord, we should, through our own fault, by neglect or ignorance, at any time, depart from the right road, and, thereby, do a great wrong to so great a Lord, and to His Virgin Mother, and to our Blessed Father Francis, and to the whole Church, both triumphant and militant. For it is written: 'Cursed are they who decline from Thy commandments.'[2]

"Whereupon I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I pray that, through the intercession of the Most Glorious Virgin, His Holy Mother, and of our most Blessed Father Francis, and of all the Saints, the Lord Who gave us a good beginning, would, likewise, grant an increase and the grace of final perseverance. Amen.

"That this may be better observed, I leave it in writing to you, most dear and beloved Sisters, both present and to come, in token of the benediction of our Lord, and of our Most Blessed Father Francis, and of my own, who am your mother and devoted servant."

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3. *LAST BLESSING OF S. CLARE.*

Clare, when dying, invokes a solemn blessing upon her Order.

HAVING made known to her spiritual daughters her last will, which they were always to keep before their eyes, and according to which they were to shape their lives, S. Clare, shortly before her blessed death, solemnly imparted upon her Sisters, both present and to come, her last blessing,

[1] Matth. VII. 14.

[2] Psalm, CXVIII. 21.

as an outcome of that maternal affection with which she loved them unto the end. These are her solemn words:

"In the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Amen.

"My Beloved Sisters:

The blessing.

"May the Almighty God give you His holy blessing! May He turn unto you with the eyes of His Mercy; and may He give you His peace!

"May He grant this blessing, not only to you, here present, but to all those who are absent, as well as those who shall, hereafter, enter into this Order, and persevere unto the end in their vocation, whether it be in this Monastery, or in any other where the same Rule is observed.

"Wherefore, I, Clare, the servant of Jesus Christ—although most unworthy—and little plant of our Father S. Francis; I, your Sister and your Mother; beseech our Lord Jesus Christ, by His tender mercies, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, of S. Michael, the Archangel, of all the holy Guardian Angels, and of our Seraphic Father: that He will bestow upon you His blessing, and confirm in heaven that which now, in His name, I give you on earth. May He pour forth upon you on this earth the abundance of His Divine grace, and may He place you in heaven with the Saints and Blessed, to enjoy His beatific vision!

"Yes! I now give you all my blessing while living. I confirm it to you after my death.

"I leave you all the blessings that I can give you, and I implore them from God Who liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen."

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4. *ACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING CLARE'S CANONIZATION.*

Innocent IV. authorizes the Bishop of Spoleto to inaugurate the judicial process preparatory to Clare's canonization.

CLARE'S wonderful life and heroic sanctity, attested by so many striking miracles, both before and after her death, were so evident that the entire Catholic world clamored for her immediate canonization. Innocent IV., who would fain have canonized her already on the day of her burial, was nothing loath to grant the universal request. But however

manifest the holiness of her life appeared to everyone, it was necessary that the accustomary process of canonization then in use should be faithfully observed. The first step towards this solemn act was to institute a judicial inquiry into the virtues and miracles of the Venerable Virgin. To this office he appointed the Bishop of Spoleto. The original Brief, written on parchment, may still be seen among the documents preserved at Assisi. It reads thus:

INNOCENT, BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,

To our Venerable Brother, the Bishop of Spoleto,
Health and Apostolic Benediction.

Brief of Innocent IV. authorizing the Bishop.

"God Who "is wonderful in His Saints,"[1] and "Who alone doth great wonders,"[2] makes known, by the evidence the diversity, and the splendor of miracles, the sanctity of those whom, after this transitory life, He rewards with everlasting happiness in heaven. He does so to the end that these signs and miracles, which are so great and so numerous, and which are possible to Him alone "Whose Unity is to be worshiped in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity,"[3] may bring before the eyes of mortals the Power of the Most High, and that men may adore more reverently the great and wonderful Name of Him "Whose Kingdom is a kingdom of all ages."[4] and Who "thunders with the voice of His Majesty"[5] in the highest heavens.

"Drawn by the hope of the heavenly reward, alone to be desired above all things, Clare, a Virgin of holy memory, Abbess of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano at Assisi, heard these words of the Prophet: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thy people and thy father's house. For the King greatly desires thy beauty."(6) And hearing it, she obeyed, and fled from the vain and

[1] Psalm LXVII., 36.
[2] Psalm CXXXV., 4.
[3] Athanasian Creed.
[4] Psalm CXLIV., 13.
[5] Job, XXXVII., 4.
[6] Psalm XVIV., 11, 12.

transitory goods of this earth. Advancing in the path that opened out before her, and forgetting the things that she had left behind, she heard the Divine Word with joy and zeal, and thought only of following the Voice she had heard. Renouncing herself, her kindred, and all she possessed, this daughter of the King loved as her Bridegroom Jesus Christ in His poverty, though He was the King of kings. Consecrating herself to Him, without reserve, soul and body, in a spirit of humility, she brought to him as dowry the gift of poverty and the vow of virginal chastity. Being a pure Virgin, she thus contracted with Him Who is the Spouse of Virgins that alliance which she had so much coveted. All men could admire the sweet fruits of this Divine union, which is that fruitful and chaste generation, who, attracted by the odor of her virtues and the love of her holy Rule, have, like a heavenly garden, yielded unto God fruit most abundantly, and who have extended already into nearly every part of the globe.

"While this Spouse lived here below, though dead to the world, she supereminently pleased the Most High by the affections of her heart, the effects of her virtues and the zeal of her good works. Now that she is dead, or rather has passed away from this world, God, the Rewarder of the just, Whose abundant mercies surpass the merits and desires of them that ask, is moved by the lustrous merits of Clare, and, for the greater honor of His glorious Name, to grant, through her intercession, and for her sake, great favors, and perform numerous miracles.

"Since then it is just and reasonable to honor, in the Church Militant, with deep respect her whom the Divine Bounty has rendered venerable in the eyes of the Faithful by reason of so many gifts, favors, and miracles, We commend your fraternal Charity, by this present rescript, to inform yourself, with the utmost care, of the veracity of those things which are related concerning her life and conversation, her manner of acting, and the alleged miracles, together with all their circumstances according to the interrogatories which you will find enclosed in this bull. Let the facts which you will collect under these various headings be transmitted to Us by you, faithfully copied by a public officer and sealed with your own seal, so that she whose soul appears to enjoy already immortal glory in heaven, may also

be exalted here on earth by receiving due honor in the pious assemblies of the Faithful.

Given at the Lateran, October 18th, in the eleventh year of Our Pontificate.[1]

Judicial investigation.

Bishop Bartholomew—such was the name of the Bishop of Spoleto—accepted the commission with the greatest joy and alacrity. To him it was an appointment, at once most consoling as well as honorable. He associated with himself two men eminent for learning and piety, Leonard, the Archdeacon of his diocese, and James, the Arch-priest of Trevi. He came to the monastery of San Damiano November 24th, eight days after the death of the Blessed Agnes. He was accompanied by Brother Leo whom we beheld assisting the Saint to pass away from the world, Brother Angelo of Rieti, who endeavored, though in vain, to comfort the sorrow-stricken Sister at the death of their mother, and Brother Mark who was the chaplain of the monastery.

Each member of the community was then called in order before the commissioners and carefully interrogated concerning the life of Clare, and their depositions were taken down on oath. There were still living in the monastery a number of Religious who had known the holy Abbess not only during her religious career, but also before her entrance into the cloister. Sister Pacifica especially, her aunt Buona Guelfuccio, was still alive, and so were several others of her intimate friends and relations. There were, likewise, a number of Sisters whom she had delivered from various illnesses by the miraculous sign of the cross.

When the Bishop had concluded with the examination of the Religious at San Damiano, he instituted a public examination into the miracles through S. Clare's intercession among the faithful outside the cloister. Then flocked together from all parts those who had, in any way, been assisted miraculously through Clare's intercession. There

[1] *i. e.*, 1253.

were those who had been relieved in various kinds of diseases. There were those who had been consoled in their sorrow and distress. There were finally those who had received signal spiritual favors. All who came, after being carefully and minutely examined, confirmed their depositions upon oath.

Acts of Alexander IV. relating to the canonization

But the witnesses were so numerous that the year 1253 came to a close without the work being completed; and the acts of the judicial investigation were not ready to be forwarded to the Sovereign Pontiff until sometime in the succeeding year. But, meanwhile, Pope Innocent IV. had departed this life and Cardinal Raynold had been elected in his place under the name of Alexander IV. He had, for a number of years, been the Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order and had always expressed great love and veneration for S. Clare. Still his particular esteem for the holy Abbess did not lead him to do anything rash. Even at the funeral of the Saint, when Pope Innocent attempted to subvert the usual order of services by substituting the office of Virgins for that of the Dead, it is he who had prudently remonstrated with the Pope, asking him to let things take their customary course.

When the acts of judicial investigations concerning Clare's life, virtues, and miracles were placed before him, he caused them, first of all, to be once more reviewed most minutely. He then appointed a commission of competent men to carefully examine again each single deposition in detail. All possible care was taken to admit nothing but what could stand the test of most rigorous criticism.

Public consistory.

The Sovereign Pontiff then proclaimed a public consistory to which he invited a number of Cardinals, Patriarchs, Bishops, and other eminent persons, laymen as well as ecclesiastics, and at which he himself presided. At this session the official acts were read aloud and the assembled Prelates were asked to give their opinion in the matter placed before them. It was the unanimous opinion of the entire

assembly that there could be no doubt as to Clare's sanctity. The Pope then appointed a special day for the actual canonization. The date was fixed for August 11th, the anniversary day of the Saint's death; and the solemn ceremony was to take place at Anagni, an important and flourishing city in those days, situated in the hills in the vicinity of Rome and used as a summer-resort by the Papal court.(1)

Solemn canonization at Anagni.

The appointed day at last arrived. It is impossible to give a description of the outward pomp and solemnity of the celebration. The Pope, accompanied by Cardinals, Patriarchs, and Prelates, and the entire suit of his court, moved in procession to the Cathedral Church where the function was to take place. People thronged the edifice in their thousands to witness the grand spectacle. The bells of the city pealed forth; bands of music filled the air with solemn strains; the whole city appeared in gala attire. All were eager to witness the imposing function; all were animated with sentiments of reverence and devotion.

The preparatory ceremonies at length came to an end. Prayers had been offered up to invoke the Divine assistance in a matter so solemn and important. All were prostrate on their knees in deep silence. Then the Sovereign Pontiff arose, ascended the throne and, wearing the tiara, pronounced the solemn act of canonization:

"For the greater honor of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the increase of the Christian Religion; by the authority of the same God Almighty, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and Our own: We, with the advice of Our Brethren, declare and decree, that Clare, of blessed memory, who, when living, was Abbess of San Damiano, at Assisi, is a Saint and deserves to be inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints, We, therefore, inscribe her therein; and We ordain, at the same time, that the universal Church shall celebrate her feast and

(1) Now a poor insignificant place, having lost all vestige of its former greatness.

office with due solemnity and devotion each year, on the day following that of her decease, namely the 12th day of August."[1]

Once more the bells of the whole city rang out. The grand hymn of thanksgiving, the *Te Deum*, was chanted by the multitudes to the solemn strains of the organ.

Then the intercession of the new Saint was for the first time publicly and solemnly invoked: "Saint Clare, pray for us;" and the Pope himself chanted the collect, or prayer, by which he solemnly invoked God's blessing upon all the Faithful through the merits and prayers of the Virgin S. Clare.

Thus ended the actual canonization. To complete the work, the Sovereign Pontiff addressed to the Bishops and Princes of the Catholic world the Bull of the Canonization of S. Clare, and ordered her life to be compiled.[2]

There has been some little misunderstanding as to the exact date of the canonization of S. Clare. This is owing to the fact that there exist several copies of the Bull of Canonization, each copy being signed on the day it was transcribed or issued, and not the actual day of canonization. The text of the Bull we here reproduce is the one which was addressed to the clergy of France, and is dated September 23d, whereas the canonization itself took place, as the ancient biography attests, on the anniversary day of the Saint's death, that is, August 11th, 1255, two years having elapsed since her departure from this world.

Bull of canonization.

We now subjoin the full text of the Bull of canonization, although it is a document of considerable length and a recapitulation of the principal events of the Saint's life.

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(1) The feast-day of Saints is usually kept on the anniversary of their death. S. Clare's feast is not kept on the 11th day of August, as August 11th is a special feast-day for the city of Assisi, it being the feast of S. Rufino, Bishop and Martyr, and Patron Saint of the Cathedral.

(2) It is this Biography which is given in Part I.

ALEXANDER, BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,

To Our Venerable Brethren, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Kingdom of France,

Health, and Apostolic Benediction!

"Clare, a clear shining light by reason of her merits, now shines, in heaven, by the immortal glory with which she is crowned, and, on earth, by the amazing miracles which she performs. Here, on earth, she shines by the lustre of that austere and sublime Order, she founded, while, in heaven above, she shines by the splendor of an eternal recompense, and the bright rays of her virtues which descend even upon our mortal vision. Here, she obtained the singular Privilege of Most High Poverty; in heaven, she has received the inestimable treasures of a blessed eternity, as all the Faithful confess who hasten to testify their devotion in her regard. Here, she was distinguished for the bright example of her good works; in heaven, the plenitude of eternal light now shines upon her and casts its reflection upon the entire Christian world by the wonders that are wrought through her. O Clare! Virgin illustrious by so many titles! illustrious before the day on which you gave yourself entirely to God; more illustrious still by the courage with which you renounced the world, and the manner in which you lived in the cloister; and most illustrious now by the light which you dispense all around after your departure from this present life.

"Yes, dear Brethren, Clare has been given to our age as a brilliant and a faithful mirror of all Christian virtues. She planted in the garden of the Heavenly Bridegroom the sweet lily of virginity. Already has the efficacy of her intercession and patronage been experienced on earth. O admirable light of Blessed Clare, which shines all the more brightly, the more we open our eyes to contemplate it. She shone in the world; and she was distinguished in the cloister. She shone as a bright star in her paternal home, and she now enlightens the entire universe. She shone during her life-time and she now shines after her death. She shone on earth; she now shines resplendently in heaven. O how magnificent is this splendor! How clear and how strong are the

emanations of this light! It was hidden under the bushel of monastic enclosure, and yet, even then, it cast afar its immortal rays. It was enclosed within the silent walls of a strict monastery, and yet it has penetrated the entire world. It was kept within, yet it manifested itself without. For Clare was hidden; yet her life is known to all. Clare was silent; yet her reputation has cried aloud. Clare was retired in a cell; yet her praises are upon the lips of all. Are we surprised at this? How could we! A vessel so excellent, and replenished with so many precious perfumes, could not exist wlthout filling the sanctuary of the Church with the aroma of her virtues. The more she retired into the depth of solitude, bruising the vessel of her body by macerations and austerities, the more the sweet odor of her holy life permeated the vast camp of the Church Militant.

"And in truth, Venerable Brethren, so it has always been the same with her. From her tenderest years, she passed lightly over the soiled paths of a corrupt world, lest she should contract the least defilement. She jealously guarded the precious treasure of virginity and devoted her life to works of piety and charity, so as to become a subject of joy and admiration to her fellow-citizens and even to those who had never seen her. The Blessed Francis heard the praises of this wonderful Virgin, and, at once, began to lead her to the perfect service of Jesus Christ. Docile to his advice, and desirous to renounce the world in order to serve God alone by the practice of voluntary poverty, accomplished, as speedily as possible, the sublime purpose with which she was transported. She, therefore, distributed in alms everything over which she had a right to dispose; for she wished to consecrate to the service of the Divine Master both her person and her possessions. Then, out of holy fear for the tumult of this world, she fled to the little Church in the country where S. Francis himself cut off her hair. When, after a few days, she had been transferred to another Monastery, her relations came to make her waver in her holy vocation, and strongly assailed her constancy. Yet she clung to the altar, holding fast by the blessed linen-cloths, and then bared her shorn head; and in this manner, she became invincible; for she was already united to God with her whole heart and could not endure even the bare idea of being torn from His Divine Service.

"At length, the Church of San Damiano, situated outside the city of Assisi, her native place, became her final abode, assigned to her by S. Francis. The Lord Who wished that His Holy Name should be honored and loved in that place, led a number of companions to Clare, in union with whom she happily laid the foundations of that excellent and admirable Order of San Damiano, which has now already extended itself throughout the entire world. Here she became the cornerstone of that sublime edifice. Here she outshone all the rest by her holiness of life and, especially, by her virginal purity which she preserved with all care and vigilance. Here she counted amongst her disciples her own mother Ortolana who, desirous to devote herself entirely to good works and to walk in the footsteps of her daughter, came to embrace the Rule and end her days in peace—a truly excellent gardener, who had planted in the garden of the Church such a distinguished tree. Here in fine, Clare undertook, after a few years, the guidance of the Monastery and of the Sisters, at the earnest wish of S. Francis.

"Yes, she was truly a noble tree, whose mighty branches have extended themselves over the entire field of the Church, to offer to everyone the delicious fruits of the Religious life. Under the shadow of this tree is to be found the sweet peace of God, as can be testified by so many disciples, who have hastened, and who are still hastening, to repose in that asylum. Clare was, indeed, the most beautiful ornament of the Valley of Spoleto, the new daughter of her country, who enriched it with such a spring of living water, so that souls can come from all sides to draw from this source the salutary aids they need. For divided into numerous channels it has flooded the whole field of the Church and nourishes the plants that grow therein. She is, indeed, a noble candlestick placed in the house of God; for attracted by the marvelous splendor, cast far and wide by the radiance of her holiness, many have come already, and many are still coming, to light their lamps at this source of light. She it is who has planted and cultivated with so much care, in the garden of faith, the vine of holy Poverty, from which are gathered such delicious and abundant fruits. She it is, who in the field of humility, has laid out this magnificent garden adorned with the varied flowers of mortification and all the other virtues springing therefrom.

She it is, who, by the rigor of her abstinence, has raised up in the territories of Religion an impregnable fortress and store house where an unlimited supply of substantial and Divine food is to be found. *She is the Princess of the Poor, the Duchess of the Humble, the Mistress of Virgins, the Abbess of Penitents.* Filled with solicitude and prudence, she governed the Monastery, and the Family confided to her care, in the fear of the Lord, in the service of Jesus Christ and in the perfect observance of the Rule of the Order. She was vigilant in her care, zealous in the discharge of her ministry, assiduous in her exhortations, diligent in her warnings, moderate in her punishments, affable in her commands, loving and compassionate towards those in suffering, modest and discreet, wise in her conversation, prudent in her government, choosing rather to serve than to command, and to honor others rather than be honored herself.

"The life of our Saint was a continual lesson for all men. In her, as in a book of life, each one found salutary rules for leading a perfect life. While in her body, she still dwelled on earth, she already lived by her spirit in Heaven. She was a vessel of humility and a store-house of all the virtues which go to make a Saint. The perfect order of charity, the sweetness of benignity, the strength of patience, that peace which unites all hearts, that communion which builds up the hearts by the sweet interchange of love:—all these admirable traits were combined in this Virgin, gentle in word and in deed, amiable to all and beloved of God and of men.

"In order that, by weakening the flesh, she might become strengthened in the spirit—for we become stronger in proportion as our enemy is weakened—she was wont to sleep upon the bare ground or upon a bundle of brush wood, with a piece of wood under her head for a pillow, and for clothing a poor tunic with a mantle of coarse material. While covering herself with these poor garments, she wore upon her body a hair-shirt made of horse hair. As to food and drink she observed such a rigorous abstinence that for a long time she took no food whatever three days each week, namely Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, although on other days she took so little that all wondered how she could live.

"Being devoted to prayer and watching without intermis-

sion, she spent in these exercises whole days and nights. Being struck down by sickness and unable to rise by herself for manual labor, she had herself raised up by the Sisters and propped up so as to be able to labor with her hands even amidst the most painful sickness, for fear of giving way to idleness. In this way she made out of the finest linen, she herself had spun, a number of corporals for the holy sacrifice of the Mass and had them distributed amongst the various churches of Assisi and the neighboring districts.

"But there shone in her, above all things, the love of entire renunciation of the goods of this earth. With what solicitude did she cultivate holy poverty! She had attached herself to this virtue with such devotedness that her love and desire grew stronger day by day. Never under any pretext whatever, did she lose sight of the strict, yet sweet compact she had made with holy poverty. No motive, however plausible, could ever make her waver in her convictions. Never would she give her consent that her monastery should have any temporal possessions, although our Predecessor [1] of Blessed memory offered her, out of his personal means, competent and sufficient revenues for the maintenance of the Sisters.

"Since such a clear and shining light could not remain hidden in the dark, the excellent virtues of Clare shone with great and numerous miracles even during her lifetime. To one of the Sisters she restored the power of speech which, for a long time she had lost almost entirely; to another, the use of her tongue, of which she had been deprived; and hearing to a third. By the power of the most holy sign of the cross, she delivered one Sister from fever, another from dropsy, a third from a malignant ulcer, and several from diverse other diseases. She healed one of the Friars of insanity. Once, when the suppy of oil had given out completely, she took the vessel, employed for that use, washed it with her own hands and then placed it outside the inclosure that the questing Brother might take it and go to solicit for oil. But lo! by God's liberality, it was found replenished with oil. Upon another time, when there was only half a loaf left for the needs of the Sisters, she caused it to be broken into small pieces and served at table; and behold He, who is the true Bread of Angels, and gives food to them that

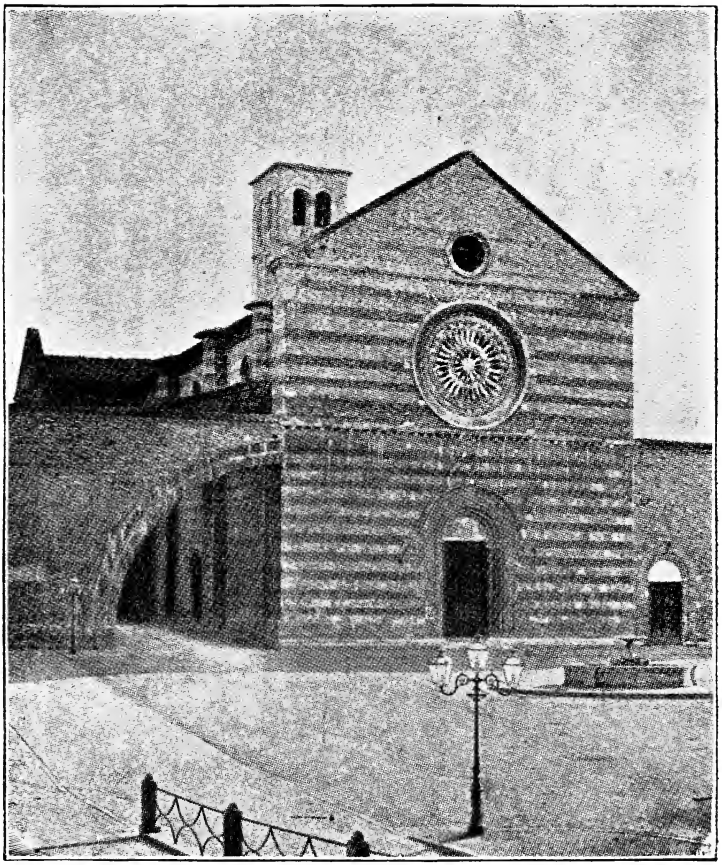
(1) Pope Gregory IX.

hunger, multiplied these small pieces in the hand of the serving Sister in such a manner that it was more than sufficient to serve as food for fifty Sisters.

"Thus, venerable brethren, God was pleased to make known, by signs and wonders, the excellent merits of this Virgin even during her lifetime. But when she came to the end of her mortal career, other miracles were witnessed. A glorious procession of happy virgins, amongst whom there was one of singular beauty and splendor, was seen to enter the cell where the servant of God lay and surround her bed in order to console her with a heavenly visit and impart to her strength from on high.

"After her death, we have seen a man, suffering from the falling sickness and having one of his legs contracted, suddenly healed of both infirmities at her tomb, to which he had been brought. We have seen the lame, the palsied, the insane, the possessed, restored to perfect health. There was a man whose right hand had been rendered entirely useless, on account of a deep wound it had received, and who, through the merits of the Saint, received back again the complete use of the limb; while another who had been afflicted with blindness for a long time, had himself conducted to the tomb of the Holy Virgin and fully recovered his sight so that he could return home without a guide. Thus this venerable daughter shone by the multitude of her works and the splendor of her miracles, so that, in her, were verified the mysterious words her mother had heard in prayer, that she would bring forth a light whose rays would illumine the world.

"Then let our holy mother the Church rejoice, venerable brethren, that she has brought forth and nourished such a daughter, who, in her turn, as fruitful mother of all virtues, has brought forth, in the religious state, a number of disciples, whom she trained, by the force of her example and the authority of her teaching, in the perfect service of Jesus Christ. Let the vast multitude of the true faithful rejoice, that the King and Lord of heaven has gloriously introduced into His Eternal Palace the Sister and companion whom He had chosen for His spouse. Let all the heavenly hosts rejoice together with us on earth over the new nuptials of a royal spouse which has just been celebrated above.



CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF S. CLARE, ASSISI, ITALY.

PRESENT CONDITION.

(*From a Photo.*)

"And since it is befitting that a Virgin, exalted by God in heaven, should also be honored by the whole Church on earth; and since the holiness of her life, and her miracles, are incontestable, as has been rendered manifest and evident by the serious and careful inquiries, the rigorous examination, and solemn consultation instituted by Us;—although the admirable works of this illustrious Virgin were already well known, far and near—We, with the common consent of all Our Brethren, the Venerable Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops, and all the other Prelates, who had assembled around the Apostolic See, confiding in the Almighty Power of God, and in virtue of the authority of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, have deemed it good to inscribe her upon the list of the Holy Virgins.

"We therefore, in virtue of these Apostolic Letters, admonish and especially command you all to celebrate and to cause to be celebrated by your subjects, with all piety and solemnity, the festival of this same Virgin on the 12th day of August, so that you may merit to have her as a good and loving advocate with God.

"And in order that all Christian people may hasten to her venerable tomb with greater ardor, and celebrate her feast with greater solemnity, we, confiding in the Mercy of Almighty God and in virtue of the authority of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, grant to all those who, having with a truly contrite heart confessed their sins and there (at her tomb) humbly invoked her intercession each year, an indulgence of one year and one quarantine.

"Given at Anagni, September 26th, in the first year of Our Pontificate." [1]

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5 *ACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE TRANSLATION OF THE BODY OF S. CLARE.*

CLARE died August 11th, 1253, and preparations were made to bury her in the little Church of San Damiano. But the Magistrates of Assisi deeming the place neither fit nor safe to contain such a treasure, begged to have the body

A new Church built in honor of S. Clare, together with a new monastery for the Religious at San Damiano.

[1] In the year 1255.

transferred to the Church of S. George, within the city. Here the body of S. Francis had also reposed for a while until it could be transferred to the Basilica erected in his honor. Hence, after the funeral services conducted at San Damiano, the body of S. Clare was carried in solemn procession within the city walls and deposited in the Church of S. George. But it was to be for a time only. For on the one hand the little sanctuary was by far too small to admit the crowds of pilgrims that continued to flock around the tomb from all parts, and, on the other hand, the citizens of Assisi deemed it their duty to raise a befitting shrine in honor of their fellow-citizen, who had not only edified them by the lustre of her virtues, but also defended them against their enemies and obtained for them innumerable blessings. But the Sovereign Pontiff himself took up the matter. By his order and at his expense a magnificent church was erected under the direction of Fra Philippo di Campello a Friar Minor, and one of the most eminent architects of those days. The church was built in the place formerly occupied by the ancient hospice of S. George. A new Monastery was likewise constructed in connection with the church for the Sisters of San Damiano so that the body of S. Clare might repose in the midst of her spiritual daughters. The ancient little Church of S. George was enclosed within the new Monastery and transformed into the Nuns' choir, so that the Sisters have within their enclosure the little chapel where the bodies of S. Francis and S. Clare had found temporary repose before being carried to their final resting place.

The new Church and Monastery were completed in 1260, and October 3rd, the Vigil of the feast of the Holy Patriarch S. Francis, was set aside by the Pope for the solemn translation of the body of S. Clare. The Bishops of Assisi and the neighboring district were directed to assist at the celebration. The following is the letter issued by

Alexander IV., the original of which is preserved with the other documents in the Monastery of S. Clare at Assisi.

ALEXANDER, BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

To the Venerable Brethren, the Bishops of Perugia, Spoleto and Assisi:

Health and Apostolic Benediction.

"As We propose, on the Vigil of the approaching festival of S. Francis to transfer, with all solemnity, the Body of Blessed Clare to a more befitting shrine, We desire and by these present letters expressly command that you will take care to assist in person at this solemn Translation, and further that you will come prepared to announce to the Faithful the Word of God on that occasion. For We empower you, in virtue of Our Apostolic Authority, to grant an Indulgence of two years and two quarantines on the day of the Translation, which Indulgence shall be extended to the above-mentioned feast of S. Francis.

"Given at Subiaco, September 9th, in the sixth year of our Pontificate." [1]

Once more the city of Assisi witnessed a magnificent spectacle, at which the inhabitants of the city and surrounding districts took part amid great rejoicings. On the day appointed, October 3d, a magnificent procession of Prelates and Clergy and other dignitaries, accompanied by multitudes of the Faithful, was seen to wend its way to the ancient little Church of S. George, now forming a portion of the new Monastery of Poor Clares. The tomb of S. Clare was opened with all due solemnities, and the Body of the Saint was found incorrupt as though she had just fallen asleep. The precious remains were then borne with all honors to the High Altar of the new Church, where everything had been prepared for their reception. Here the body was deposited

Solemn translation of the body to the new church

[1] In the year 1260.

in a stone coffin which was carefully closed and placed in a a deep cavity cut out in the rock beneath the High Altar. The cavity was afterwards filled up with solid masonry and an inscription carved upon the marble steps of the altar: "Hic jacet corpus S. Claræ Virginis."[1] The event is commemorated each year by a special feast throughout the entire Franciscan Order.

Installment of the Religious of San Damiano in their new monastery

The Church of S. George had been the property of the Canons attached to the Cathedral of San Ruffino. It was, therefore, transferred, with the authorization of the Sovereign Pontiff, to the Religious of San Damiano, and the new Church and Monastery were placed under the immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See.[2] On the day of the Translation, the Sisters, headed by B. Benedetta, their new Abbess, and successor of S. Clare, bade farewell to their beloved Retreat of San Damiano, and took possession of their new asylum. They were thus privileged to witness the solemn function of the Translation of the Body of their beloved Mother, and, henceforth, it was their joy and their glory to watch and pray over the tomb that enclosed her sacred remains. Miracles continued to be wrought as heretofore, and attracted numerous pilgrims to the new sanctuary. The bodies of a number of the early companions had likewise been transferred from San Damiano and deposited near the body of S. Clare, so that now she sleeps in the midst of her first disciples to await the glory of resurrection.

Consecration of the church of Santa Chiara.

The new Church had been dedicated to S. Clare on the day of the Translation of her Body. In 1265 it was consecrated with extraordinary solemnity. Pope Clement IV.[3] having come to Assisi to venerate the holy shrine, charged

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[1] *i. e.*, Here lies the Body of S. Clare.

[2] This Privilege was ratified by Pope Leo XIII., July 30, 1880, in order to save the Sanctuary from the sacrilegeous hands of the spoliators of church property.

[3] 1264-1268.

one of his Cardinals, Cardinal Rodulfo, to undertake the consecration of the new Church. The Sovereign Pontiff himself, and the whole papal court, assisted at the imposing ceremony. The High Altar was consecrated by the pope's own hands; the two side-altars, the one dedicated to S. George, and the other to the holy martyrs, SS. Cosmas and Damian, were consecrated by Cardinals.

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6. *ACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE FINDING OF THE BODY OF S. CLARE.*

Precautions taken in the middle ages to secure the bodies of the Saints.

THE middle ages have rightly been called the ages of faith. So they were. Guided by the light of faith, the people had a true appreciation of holiness and virtue. Hence arose that deep veneration for the Saints of God, for which they were so remarkable. For this reason, too, they honored and venerated their sacred relics and guarded them with jealous care. But owing to the troubles of the times arising from petty wars between neighboring cities and from the ravages of hostile armies that overran Italy at various times, they took all possible precautions to secure the sacred relics so that they could not easily be robbed or outraged. For this reason, the body of S. Francis had been hidden away so carefully in the new Basilica that the actual spot of his tomb had remained a secret for centuries. The place of S. Clare's tomb was no secret. It was right beneath the High altar. But the body itself was hidden deep below and guarded by massive masonry. The bare inscription on the marble steps of the altar was the only indication of its presence.

Search for the Body of S. Clare.

As time went on, both the religious as well as the faithful, desired to have a more tangible evidence of their precious treasure. By a special authorization of the Holy See, the body of S. Francis had been searched for and was discovered

in 1818, after incessant labors carried on during fifty-two nights; for the work had to be done in secret. It was natural, then, to see the same honors extended to the body of S. Clare. But it was not until the year 1850, that the requisite permission was obtained from the Holy See, and the Bishop of Assisi authorized to conduct the proceedings. The work was commenced August 23d, and on Friday, August 30th, the workmen caught the first glimpse of the stone coffin. The Bishop was at once informed, and he hastened to the spot to view the tomb and share in the rejoicings of the Sisters. A Triduum was ordered to commence September 15th, and Sunday, September 22d, was appointed for the beginning of the ceremonies in connection with the Finding of the body. The neighboring Bishops were invited to assist at the ceremony, and a pastoral letter was issued by the Bishop of Assisi to his flock.

Luigi Landi Vittori,
Patrician of Cora and Velletri,
By the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See,
Bishop of Assisi,
Abbot in commendam of San Chrispolto di Bettona,
Domestic Prelate and Assistant at the Pontifical Throne.
To his Beloved Flock
Health and Benediction.

Pastoral letter of Right Rev. Luigi Landi, Bishop of Assisi, to his flock.

"Since the day on which, by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, we were, in spite of our weakness, raised to the fullness of the priesthood, and even before we came amongst you, beloved inhabitants of Assisi, the pious Daughters of S. Clare had addressed urgent and well-founded entreaties to us concerning the object of which we are now about to speak to you. They implored us to use every means to obtain from the Apostolic See the necessary permission to withdraw the body of their venerated institutor, your illustrious fellow-citizen, from the obscurity of the tomb. And, even then, we hastened to lay their ardent desires at the feet of Gregory XVI.,[1] of revered and holy memory, and the Pope, in his clemency, deigned to reply that we might make use of our rights.

[1] 1831-1846.

"But when we came to this seraphic abode, we did not deem it prudent to comply with their pious request, although we were well aware that their desire was participated in by you all, inhabitants of Assisi, our beloved children. Soon, alas! there came days of sadness and mourning, and we thought with even greater reason that we could not attempt so great an undertaking.

"Meanwhile the tempest passed away; and very soon these devoted hand-maids of Christ, the Daughters of S. Clare, and a great number of their Sisters from various dioceses, renewed their entreaties in a still more pressing manner, begging us to yield at last to their desires, which were the desires of their fellow-citizens, and, it might be said, of the entire Catholic world, which had, at all times, honored in our Saint the first-born Daughter of the Seraphic Patriarch. Hence, in order to satisfy the desires of our beloved Daughters, and especially of those who are, in Christ, our Daughters of predilection, we eagerly availed ourselves of the favorable opportunity, afforded us by our last journey to Rome. When we offered to His Holiness Pius IX [1] the homage due to him by so many titles, we also expressed to him your common desire, and he, the Sovereign Head of the Church, deigned to repeat to us, with his incomparable goodness, the words of his venerable predecessor, that we might make use of our rights.

"We, at once, ordered researches to be instituted in secret in order to discover the body of the Saint, and already have these researches been rewarded with such success that the coffin, containing the sacred deposit, can be plainly seen at the bottom of the excavation. Having now discovered the precise spot of the tomb of the Saint, we hastened to invite the Bishops of the neighboring dioceses to assemble here on the 22d of the present month and to assist at the final opening of the sacred shrine. But in order to insure yet more the success of so important a work, we have deemed it our duty to order the pious exercises of a Triduum to be opened with a suitable discourse in the Church of our Saint on the evening of the 15th of the present month. At the close of these exercises, another excavation will be made in front of the High altar, so as to enable everyone to view the coffin. On the morning of the 23d, we shall proceed to the complete

[1] 1846-1878.

uncovering and opening of the tomb. This ceremony will take place in the presence of the Archbishop of Mitylene, Commissary Apostolic for Umbria and Sabina, of the Archbishops and Bishops of Spoleto, Perugia, and Foligno, and in our own presence, with the assistance of a deputation, chosen from the different ranks of citizens, so that the identity of the body of the Holy Institutor may be attested and confirmed, in a clear and legal manner. At the same time, two notaries will draw up a deed of the entire proceedings, as a testimony for future ages, to be submitted by us to the Holy See.

Such is the happy intelligence which, with great joy, we make known to you, inhabitants of Assisi, our beloved children, so that you also, in your turn, may rejoice and be edified. Yes, children, it is indeed an occasion of holy joy, an occasion on which we may rightly congratulate ourselves. It will be permitted to us to behold, with our own eyes, the sacred remains of S. Clare. None of our ancestors, for the last six centuries, have had this happiness; and we, thanks be to God, who are her fellow-citizens, have the consolation of exhuming the venerable ashes of S. Clare in order to pay them all due honors. "Her bones were visited, and after death they prophecied." [1] Yes, her bones shall be visited, and they shall prophecy. For, being exhibited to the pious contemplation of the inhabitants of this city, they will remind them of the glorious deeds, which they were instrumental in performing, while animated with the breath of life. They will recall those brilliant examples of every virtue, above all, that humility, that self-denial, that spotless purity, that contempt of the world, by which our Saint triumphed over the seduction of the age, the attraction of pleasure, the honor and riches of the world, and which led her to embrace that austere rule, which enchains the passions, stifles concupiscence, and raises the edifice of salvation upon the ruins of self-love.

Yes, her bones shall be visited, and they shall prophecy. They shall prophecy in these days when the spirit of falsehood is making such efforts to obscure the glory of the Catholic Church; in these days when the "cockle" is growing up in such abundance as to stifle the "good seed" [2] of

[1] Ecclesiasticus, XLIX., 18.

[2] Matthew, XIII, 27,

truth, when the deposit of the Gospel is being assailed with such fury by the "mystery of iniquity," [1] when faith is tottering in the hearts of the faithful, when the Church of Jesus Christ beholds the morals of her children growing each day more and more corrupt, the spirit of fervor lessened and indifference increasing.

They shall prophecy. Divine Providence may have ordained, that we should recover, and once more behold the bones of S. Clare to provide a remedy against so many evils. It may have ordained, that the remembrance of her life should re-animate that fervor which invites to the practice of virtue, and leads and persuades to live a holy life. It is impossible, dear children, that, in the presence of these holy ashes, you will be able to close your ears to that voice which will say to you, in the depth of your hearts: Clare lived holily; Clare died holily. Why then, should we not follow her example, we who are of the same country, who have the same nature, the same inclinations, the same obstacles, the same aids and even greater examples? Clare knew how to conquer the frailties of this same nature, the attacks of these same passions and the most trying difficulties, and gave, at all times, striking proofs of her fidelity, her love of God, and her constancy; and why should we not do the same, we who are her follow-citizens? Roused by these thoughts and animated by these examples which speak louder than words, you will, dear children, return to the paths of justice and holiness, as we implore you "through the bowels of the mercy of our God." [2]

And truly, this unexpected event, which in a few days the inhabitants of Assisi will witness, is, no doubt, a tender invitation from the Lord to move them to a better life. "Harden not your hearts!" [3] Thus God in His mercy, speaks to you dear children. Take heed, not to mar the splendor of this festivity, when you shall behold the remains of your spotless fellow-citizen carried in procession through the festively attired streets of the happy city of Mount Subasio. Take care, dear children, that the sacred remains, as they pass by your dwellings, may there find peace and concord, that her blessing may come upon you, fill you, and

[1] II. Thessal, II, 7.
[2] Luke, I, 78,
[3] Psalms XCIV, 8

remain forever in the bosom of your families. Beware, dear children, lest Clare should find in your homes, discord and sin; otherwise, her passing by, might prove fatal to you, as of old happened to the Philistines and Bethsamites, when the ark of God passed through their territories. [1] Let all who may be defiled by sin, enter into themselves and purify their souls, before they appear in the presence of the sacred remains. Let iniquity disappear, even as of old the statue of Dagon in the temple of Azotus fell to the ground before the ark of the Lord. [2]

Profit, dear children, by the salutary exhortations, given you by your Chief Pastor, who loves you dearly in the Lord. Yes, let the cry of his fatherly voice enter into the depth of your hearts, and move you to imitate the virtues of Clare; just as the bare announcements of the finding of her body has filled you with joy and consolation. This joy, we repeat with pleasure, is just; for to you, God has reserved the honor to behold such wonders, and Assisi has the happiness to see her ancient glory renewed in your own days. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see." [3] It is even so, beloved children! For this consoling event recalls to our memory the three most glorious epochs of our city.

The first was that in which Francis and Clare, those two great luminaries, shone within our walls and rendered Assisi famous throughout the world. At the sight of these two great models of holiness, it might then be said, that the glory of the Lord had descended upon our city. "The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," exclaimed all they that visited it; and they called it blessed.

The second epoch was that when the Seraphic Patriarch and the admirable Virgin passed hence to the embrace of their Lord. Since the fame of their heroic deeds and wonders had already spread in all directions, people came from all parts of the world to visit and venerate the humble monuments erected in their honor; and not only theirs, but those also, of a great number of their followers, which were grouped around them.

The third epoch was that when the finding of the prec-

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[1] I Kings, VI, 19.
[2] I Kings, V, 3.
[3] Isaias, XL, 5.
[4] Isaias, LX, 1

ious body of the Patriarch of the poor took place. What crowds of people came then hither! How many pilgrims of every tongue and nation! How many illustrious personages: Cardinals, Pontiffs and Princes! All were desirous still more to enhance, by their presence, the glory of this favored soil; and God Himself seemed to say to this city: "I will make thee to be an everlasting excellence, a joy unto generation and generation."[1]

Now a fourth epoch is in preparation, the Finding of the Virginal remains of our Saint. Yes, Assisi, the glory of the Lord will rise upon thee more and more; for the wonderful life of Clare will be recalled everywhere, not only in Italy, but in the most distant lands wherever there are faithful followers of this Holy Virgin to be found.

See then, beloved Children, and take it to heart; the glory of God is not as the glory of the world. The glory of the world engenders sin and pride, but the glory of God produces virtue and holiness. Hence I say to you with the Apostle: "Be zealous for the better gifts."[2] Seek, dear Children, the glory of God; be ever faithful to Him and loyal to His Holy Church. May henceforth it be said of Assisi and of everyone of you: "Iniquity shall no more be heard in thy land."[3] Then will Clare truly become the light and the eternal glory of this city. It is this we wish with all our hearts. May our desires be accomplished! May these, our words, be literally verified, through the merits and the prayers of our Saint! Hence we impart unto you all our Pastoral Blessing.

Given at Assisi, at our Episcopal Palace, the 12th day of September, 1850.

✠ Luigi, Bishop of Assisi.
Luigi Alexandri, Chancellor.

Opening of the Tomb. Graphic account of an eye witness.

The day at length arrived on which the tomb was to be opened. It was Sunday, September 22nd, when the ceremonies commenced. The Bishops assembled in the church and, after carefully inspecting everything, gave orders that the vault should be entirely excavated and the cement removed, so that the stone coffin could easily be opened. At

[1] Isaias, LX., 15.
[2] I. Cor. XII., 31.
[3] Isaias, LX., 18.

midnight, the workmen commenced their labors, and by nine o'clock the next morning everything was ready. First Pontifical Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop of Spoleto, at the Church of S. Mary, near the Episcopal Palace. Then the Bishops, the Canons of San Ruffino, the Superiors of the Religious Houses in Assisi, and the principal citizens who had received special invitations, walked in solemn procession to the Church of Santa Chiara. The Bishops with their attendants descended into the cave, and having once more identified the tomb, ordered it to be opened.

The rest will be told in the words of an eminent eye-witness: [1]

"When we reached Perugia I heard from the Bishops there that, in four days from that time, they were going to open the tomb of S. Clare of Assisi, which had lain deep buried ever since the thirteenth century under the High Altar of the Church. On this news we held a council and as the boat which was to convey us from Ancona to Venice was not to sail until the 29th, it was decided that we were to remain at Assisi the four days, and to make our stay at Loretto shorter. * * * When we arrived at Assisi, the first thing we did was to go and see how far they had proceeded with the excavation. We found they had just got to to the coffin, which was of stone, and the lid of which was nine feet below the High Altar. There was plenty to do and see at Assisi. I said Mass twice at the shrine of S. Francis and once in the Portiuncula."

"The Church which interested me most, was that in which S. Clare began her religious Order under the guidance of S. Francis. There we saw the window (or rather door), from which S. Clare expelled the Saracens, and the ciborium which she used on that occasion. It is of alabaster, lined with ivory. Also the table at which she dined, and blessed the bread, and the bell with which she used to call the nuns together; we also saw the identical stalls in which she and her nuns sat, and the place where they took their recreation. Franciscans now inhabit the convent, but they preserve all these precious relics with great care."

[1] Very Rev. Canon Chadwick, of Ushaw, England, in a letter to the Poor Clares, Scorton, Yorkshire, England.

The morning at length arrived for the opening of the tomb. I went early to say Mass over the body of the Saint. There were present at the function six Bishops.[1] As we had called on the Bishop of Assisi, and made our devoirs, we obtained good places in the Church, for only a select number were admitted.

The writer here fully describes the preliminary ceremonies, and then continues:

"Then began the severing in two of the iron straps which bound the coffin, during which proceeding the Bishop of Perugia, and another, remained in the vault. I offered to hold the Bishop of Perugia's candle, which offer he, good man, graciously accepted, but not without a smile, as much as to say, it is not merely to oblige me you do this. Thus I secured a place below in the vault during the time."

"I cannot express what intense anxiety I felt while the smiths were getting through the iron straps, how often I thought of the Nuns, and how often I wished we might thus go and visit S. Cuthbert at Durham.(1) At length all was ready for raising the lid. Two more Bishops, a medical man and three or four more witnesses, were summoned down into the vault. When they had entered, a curtain was let down at the opening, in order, as much as possible, to prevent the air from affecting the body of the Saint, should it be found entire. After this, they began, with ropes which ran through pulleys in the roof of the vault, to raise the lid. To our pious disappointment, the sweet Virgin Saint was not found entire. The skull was perfect, but lay at one side, as if the coffin had been too short, and detached from the bones of the neck. The chest had fallen in, and I could not discover many rib bones. On her breast was a laurel branch and a crown of flowers. When the lid of the coffin was put aside, an excommunication was read against any one taking the least particle away.

"We then went up into the Church. The medical men and other witnesses now examined the remains, and gave their account in writing. The veneration of the relics then began. After the Bishops had been down, the Bishop of Assisi went out of the Church, and came back leading after

[1] Not counting the Bishop of Assisi, for there were present seven Bishops in all.

(1) Co. Durham, England.

him all the good Nuns, Novices, and Lay-Sisters. It was a most affecting sight. I bit my lips, and looked savage, and pulled my mouth, and made my eyes look very round; but it was no use. I could hear the devotional sighs and sobs of the Nuns as they passed, and see their handkerchiefs stealing up under their veils, and there was an end of our composure and our dignity—we cried as heartily as they did. Poor things, how devoutly they viewed, and how affectionately they kissed the remains of their Holy Mother and Foundress!

"When they had satisfied their devotion, they glided out of the church like angels, singing the *Te Deum*. We were allowed to touch the sacred remains with beads and crosses. I touched the head with my beads, which I have broken and not used since, a portion of which I intend for the good Sisters of Scorton, [1] as I am sure they will value them amongst the other precious things they have to remind them of S. Clare."

After the people had devoutly visited the sacred relics, the body of the Saint was carefully raised from the stone coffin and placed in a crystal shrine, prepared for that purpose. The case was closed and sealed by the seven Bishops and then removed to the High Altar, where it remained exposed until the 26th. The whole ceremony had lasted about seven hours.

Public rejoicings.

However grand and imposing the ceremonies had been, the inhabitants of Assisi were not yet satisfied. They wanted to do something more to express their veneration for the saint. First of all, a special Triduum of thanksgiving was held, beginning September 26th. A panegyric was preached each evening by an eminent orator. September 29th, the feast of S. Michael, the Archangel, was fixed to close the public festivities. On the evening before, the whole city was brilliantly illuminated, and resounded with music and singing on every side. On the day itself, Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop of Spoleto with unwonted solemnity. In the afternoon the sacred relics

[1] Now of S. Clare's Abbey, Darlington, Yorkshire, England.

were carried in solemn procession throughout the city amidst the universal rejoicing of the people. The procession did not return until the evening. The body was then formally handed over to the Sisters to be guarded by them until the subterranean chapel would be ready for its final repose. God was pleased to add to the splendor of the solemnity by a number of miracles which were wrought through the Saint's intercession on this occasion.

"And her Tomb shall be glorious."

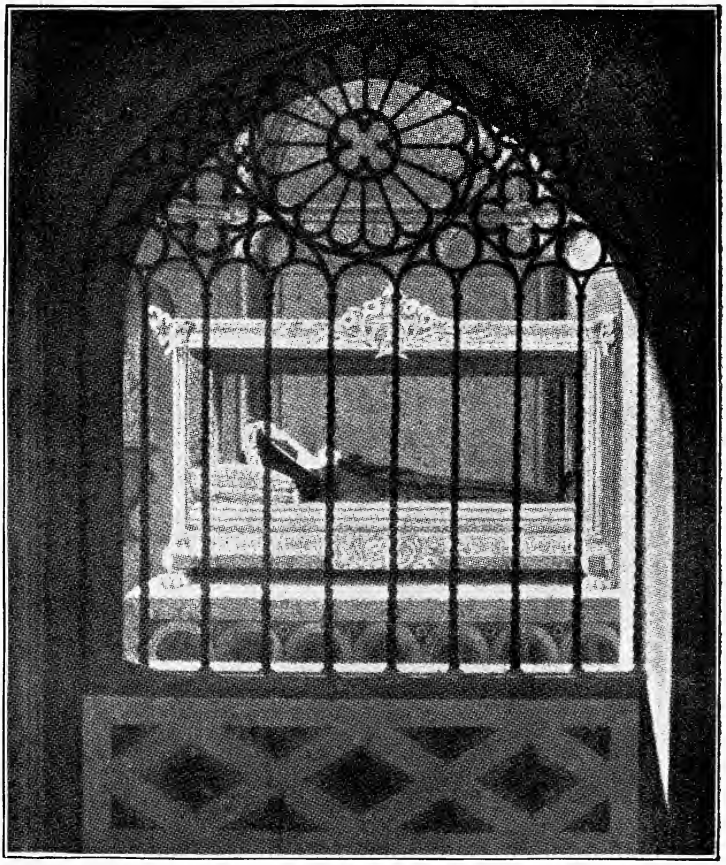
There is a striking similarity between S. Francis and S. Clare. Chosen by God for a great work in His church, they were both filled by the Holy Ghost with marvelous graces and guided by Him in an extraordinary manner. Both became great luminaries of virtue and holiness, and the good performed by them will last to the end of time. When they died, their obsequies were observed with the greatest pomp and solemnity. For a while, both their bodies rested in the little church of S. George, until a magnificent Basilica was erected to enshrine the body of S. Francis and another to hold that of S. Clare. For six centuries their sacred remains were hidden away from view, until they were marvelously brought to light again. In the Basilica of S. Francis, a subterranean chapel, or crypt, was excavated around the spot where the body had been found, and there his holy relics are now venerated by crowds of devout pilgrims from all lands. A similar honor was reserved for the body of S. Clare. In the place where her body had rested, a crypt was excavated and a magnificent reliquary erected. The work was designed by Canon Morichelli, Confessor of the Poor Clares at Assisi. It was commenced June 22d, 1852, but owing to the troublesome times and the want of means, it was left unfinished for a good while, until, by the generous alms of the faithful, sent in from every part of the world, it was at length completed, in September, 1872. October 3d, the anniversary of the first translation, the sa-

[1] Isaias XI, 10.

cred body was removed from the choir of the Sisters and reposited in the new shrine. The ceremony was conducted with great pomp and solemnity, and presided over, at the command of Pope Pius IX, by his present Holiness, Leo XIII, who was then Cardinal Pecci and Archbishop of Perugia.

Here then the body of S. Clare now rests in a magnificent crystal shrine. The crypt is lit up with numerous lights, so that the body can plainly be seen by the devout visitors. It is clothed in the habit of the Order. The face, hands, and feet are bare. A crown of flowers encircles the head.

Thus she shines, in her body, even now still on earth; and so her tomb shall be glorious throughout all time.



ACTUAL TOMB OF S. CLARE AT ASSISI.

(*From a Photo.*)

VI.

Brief Historical Sketch of the Order of S. Clare.

1. *THE ORDER DURING THE LIFE TIME OF S. CLARE.*

FRANCIS looked upon Clare and her companions at San Damiano as "Sisters whom the Lord had given him," and therefore considered himself in honor and duty bound to take care of them. Hence, for a number of years, he personally guided and instructed them and acted as their Religious Superior. It was he who appointed Clare Abbess of the community of San Damiano. It was he who promoted the extension of the Order by sending out Religious from San Damiano to different places to establish new Houses or govern such as had already been founded.

But when S. Francis considered the Sisters of San Damiano to be firmly grounded in the true spirit of the new Institute and when the Order actually began to spread everywhere, he was in doubts whether he would extend to the entire Order the same care and solicitude he had shown to the Religious of San Damiano, and finally came to the conclusion to sever all connection with the Order of Poor Ladies and place it on an independent footing. For this reason he begged Cardinal Ugolino to take official charge of the entire Order. The Cardinal consented, and then the Order of S. Clare was formally separated from the Order of Friars Minor. When S. Francis heard how some of his Brethren still continued to occupy themselves with the direction of the

Sisters and how in some Monastaries the Sisters were called Sisters Minor, he wrote to the Cardinal on this subject, requesting him to put a stop to these proceedings. "I pray you to grant me two things," he wrote to the Cardinal, "first, as much as possible to prevent my Brethern from association and intimacy with the Sisters; for so only will their virtue be placed above suspicion; and second, not to allow the Sisters to be called anything but "*Poor Ladies*" or "*Poor Recluses,*" until a definite name has been found for them."

Shortly afterwards Francis set out for Egypt to preach the gospel to the infidels. It was at this period, between August, 1218, and July, 1219, that Cardinal Ugolino, with the consent and approval of the Sovereign Pontiff, drew up a definite Rule for the Sisters, based on that of S. Benedict. The Rule imposed great austerities, even greater than S. Francis himself had laid down. Yet it lacked the essential point. That absolute Poverty and entire renunciation of all earthly possessions, so much desired by S. Francis and coveted by S. Clare, and by her companions, had been set aside as something impracticable and almost impossible, and possession in common had been allowed. By this step, the Order was still further removed from the Order of Friars Minor, and though not actually subjected to, or joined with the Benedictine Order, still it became more or less Benedictine in appearance so much so that, by some, the Order of S. Clare has actually been claimed to be a Branch of the Benedictine Order.

S. Clare felt sorely disappointed with the Rule and begged to be allowed to continue the observance of absolute Poverty, a permission granted to S. Clare in favor of San Damiano and several other Monasteries which were animated with the same spirit.

Upon his return from Egypt, Francis, too, was greatly grieved at what had taken place, and, once more, took the

matter into his own hands, subject, of course, to the consent and approval of Cardinal Ugolino. Hence, he drew up for the Sisters a Rule, similar in every respect to that which he had given to the Brethren. By this act, the two Orders were once more united, and the Second Order placed again under the direction of the First Order. S. Francis pledging himself in writing that he would, both by himself and by his Order, take the same care of the Sisters as of the Brethren. The Cardinal Protector, appointed by the Pope for the Brethren, was, at the same time, the Protector and Moderator of the Poor Ladies also.

Still, the Rule, given by S. Francis was not accepted everywhere. Some of the Monasteries continued to observe the Rule, given by Cardinal Ugolino.

After the death of S. Francis, the fermentation, which had already commenced in his Order during his own lifetime on the point of the observance of Poverty, broke out more openly. Some of the Friars maintained that, with the death of S. Francis, the rigorous obligation of absolute Poverty had ceased to exist; whereas others insisted that the observance of Poverty as inculcated by S. Francis was an essential and distinctive feature of his Order, and could, therefore, never be set aside without destroying the Order itself. As long as these disputes did not actually touch S. Clare and her Order, she prudently kept aloof, merely warning her Sisters not to allow themselves to be carried away by these lax views concerning Holy Poverty. But when, after a time, pressure was brought upon her by influential men of the Order, especially Friar Elias, and even by Pope Gregory himself, to accept some fixed revenues, she then stood up as the intrepid champion of the cause of Holy Poverty and firmly rejected all inducements of mitigation. And to secure the Sisters against any such importunities in the future, she asked and obtained, in 1228, the famous Privilege of Most High Poverty, by which the Sisters cannot

be compelled by any persons whomsoever to accept or hold property.

Yet the whole Order was not yet saved. The Rule, given by S. Francis, had only obtained the verbal approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff (in 1228) and was, therefore, merely tolerated. The Brief granting the Privilege of Most High Poverty was only local, referring to San Damiano alone and not to the Monasteries of the whole Order. Agitations to gain the Sisters over to less rigorous views meanwhile continued, in consequence of which, in 1246, a number of Monasteries were nominally allowed to accept, and hold, possession in common; and, in 1247, a new Form or Mode of Life was drawn up and imposed upon all the Sisters of the Order of San Damiano, as the Order was then called. This Rule was solemnly promulgated by a Bull of Pope Innocent IV., given at Lyons, August 6th, 1247. The new Rule was a modification of that of Cardinal Ugolino, and aimed at completing the union between the First and the Second Order. Yet it proved to be another heavy trial for S. Clare and all true lovers of Holy Poverty, for it extended to all the Monasteries of the Order the concession to hold property granted in 1246 to some Monasteries.

But the prayers and desires of S. Clare at length prevailed. In 1252, Cardinal Raynold solemnly approved the Rule given by S. Francis, in the name of the Pope; and finally, in 1253, just three days before her death, the Sovereign Pontiff Himself sanctioned and approved the Rule by a Bull, given at Assisi, August 9th, 1253.

2. *THE ORDER IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES AFTER THE DEATH OF S. CLARE.*

IT would seem that the solemn sanction of the Rule by the Sovereign Head of the Church should place the Order on a solid basis. It is true that, by this act, the Church had

formally approved the observance of absolute Poverty and secured it for all time to come. It also caused a number of Monasteries, which had hitherto held back, to adopt the strict Rule. Still the Institute was yet far from forming an entire compact Body. A few Monasteries still adhered to the Rule of Ugolino. Others observed the Rule of 1247. And even in those Monasteries, where the strict Rule had been introduced, there was no uniformity of observance. A number of divergencies had sprung up, arising chiefly from local customs, or other particular circumstances, and sometimes, too, from special favors, or privileges, granted by the Holy See.

Very soon, another point of difference supervened. The royal Princess Isabelle of France had founded a Monastery at Longchamp near Paris and wished to introduce the Rule of S. Clare. But considering the observance of absolute Poverty too severe, she begged S. Bonaventure to introduce certain mitigations so as to allow the possession of property in common. This was done, and the new Rule, drawn up by S. Bonaventure, with the assistance of five other Doctors of the Order, obtained the approval of Pope Alexander IV. in 1258.

In 1260, twenty Ladies commenced their novitiate in the royal Abbey, as the new Monastery was designated, under direction of five Religious from the Monastery at Rheims. B. Isabelle herself entered the Monastery, yet abstained from making her profession, as her constant infirmities prevented her from the perfect observance of the Rule. The Abbey soon became renowned, and other foundations were made from it in different places.

In 1263, the General Chapter of the Friars, assembled at Pisa, under the presidency of S. Bonaventure, passed a resolution to decline the direction of the Order of S. Clare; and Urban IV., the reigning Pope, ratified this resolution. Hitherto, there had been but one Cardinal Protector for both the Friars and the Sisters. Now a separate Cardinal Pro-

tector was appointed by Pope Urban for the Sisters alone. This arrangement, however, lasted but one year, as it occasioned a number of disputes between the two Cardinal Protectors, Cardinal Cajetan, the new Protector of the Sisters, demanding too much for his charge. S. Bonaventure was, therefore, prevailed upon to assume once more the direction of the Order of S. Clare. This he did, yet only on condition that the Sisters would consider it as a mere favor, without ever being able to claim it as a right.

About this time, another attempt was made, though in vain, to unite all the Monasteries of the Order under one common Rule. In 1264, Pope Urban IV., acting upon the advice of S. Bonaventure, drew up a Rule, based on that of S. Francis, with certain modifications, similar to those which were in use at Longchamp, and commanded it to be observed throughout the whole Order. But as there always existed a number of fervent and zealous Religious, who, animated by the spirit of S. Francis and of S. Clare, strongly opposed every advance to lessen the strict observance of Most High Poverty, the Pope soon found himself obliged to yield to the entreaties of the earnest souls to be allowed to continue in their strict observance of the Rule, given by S. Francis, and promulgated by S. Clare. Yet there were other Religious, too, who, having a great desire to be numbered amongst the spiritual children of the Holy Patriarch, yet fearing to be prevented, by reason of their weakness, to observe the Rule in its absolute rigor, gladly accepted the modifications offered by Pope Urban. Perfect union became thus impossible, and the Order naturally divided itself into two Branches. There were those who followed the Rule of S. Francis without any modifications, or the *First Rule of S. Clare,* and those who followed the same Rule with the modifications introduced by Pope Urban, or the *Second Rule.* The former were called *Poor Clares,* the latter *Urbanists.* Yet the Urbanist Branch

of the Order, notwithstanding its modifications, is still one of the most austere Orders in the Church; and that it is acceptable to God, is evident from the fact that it has given to the Order a number of holy souls some of whom have already been promoted by the Church to the public veneration of the faithful.

3. *PRINCIPAL REFORMS OF THE ORDER.*

The great Reform of the Friars Minor in Italy, in the fourteenth century, brought about chiefly by S. Bernardine of Siena and his disciples, naturally extended itself to the Order of Poor Clares. A vast number of Monasteries of the Urbanist Branch adopted the First Rule of S. Clare and placed themselves under the direction of the Friars Minor of the Observance. A great many new Monasteries of the Reform were also established. This was a resplendant period of revival of the Franciscan Spirit and added a number of Saints and Blessed to the Franciscan Institutes. The Second Order counts six illustrious Virgins who lived at that particular time and whose public veneration has already been decreed by the Church.

The same century witnessed another important Reform brought about in France and Belgium through the humble instrumentality of S. Colette, one of the greatest Saints of the Order of S. Clare. She was born of lowly extraction at Corbic in Picardy, France, January 13th, 1381. After the death of her parents she sought admittance in various Religious Homes, yet could not find anywhere the realization of her ardent longing after perfection. God had destined her for something else. She at length returned to her native place, where she entered the Third Order of S. Francis, and for five years lived as a Recluse in a small

narrow cell, edifying all by her wonderful life of prayer and penance. It was here that God made known to her that it was His wish that she should re-establish and propagate the strict observance of the Original Rule of S. Clare. For a while she resisted, thinking she might be under a delusion. Being however, finally convinced that it was God's will, she left her retreat to present herself before the Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIII, who just then resided in Nice. By him she was received and professed in the Order of Poor Clares, and, by a special Brief, dated October 14th, 1406, appointed Reformer of the Order and Abbess General over all the Monastaries she should reform or establish. The indomitable zeal and perseverance in spite of the many hardships and oppositions she had to encounter, the marvelous success that crowned her efforts, the wonders and prodigies she performed, the heroic virtues that shone forth in her, are things impossible to be described in words. It has rightly been said that, in her, the glorious Virgin S. Clare seemed to have re-appeared on earth. At her death, which took place at Ghent, in Belgium, March 6th, 1447, she had personally established seventeen Monastaries of the new Reform, leaving to her spiritual daughters special constitutions or comments on the Rule of S. Clare, which were confirmed and approved by several Pontiffs and Councils of the Church. After her death the Reform spread still more and was soon transplanted into other countries, and has come down in its primitive vigor to the present day; and there is no doubt that in her own prophetic words, "no revolutions, nor the corruption of the world, nor the decay of faith shall ever have power to extinguish this torch which was lighted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

The Branch of the Capuchin Poor Clares was commenced by Mary Laurentia Longa at Naples, Italy, in 1538. She was born in Spain and married an Italian government official in Naples. Being miraculously delivered through the

Benedicat Vos Deus et liberet a malo

POPE PIUS, IX. 1846-1878.

(*From a Photo of 1875.*)

intercession of Our Lady at Loretto, from death by poison, administered to her by a faithless servant, she resolved to devote the rest of her days to works of mercy and piety. She founded a hospital for incurables, whom she tended with her own hands, built a convent for the Capuchin Franciscan Friars, and a Monastery for the Sisters of the Third Order, into which she herself finally entered upon the death of her husband. This Monastery was at first under the spiritual direction of the Theatine Fathers, but afterwards placed under the direction of the Capuchins. Desirous to lead a more perfect life, she persuaded her companions to exchange the Rule of the Third Order for that of S. Clare and to adopt the constitutions of the Capuchins. Thus originated the first Monastery of the Capuchin Branch of the Order of Poor Clares, which in severity surpasses any of the other Branches.

The Venerable Founder died December 20th, 1542. The Reform was approved by Pope Clement VIII. in 1600.

In 1572 a Monastery of the Capuchin Poor Clares was established in Rome. S. Charles Borromeo introduced them into the city of Milan. Two Monasteries were founded in France in 1625, one in Paris, another at Marseilles. Numerous other foundations followed, and the Order is still active at the present day, some Monasteries being under the direction of the Capuchins, others under Episcopal jurisdiction.

To this Branch of the Order belongs S. Veronica Giuliani, who was honored with the stigmata of our Lord. One of the Venerable servants of God, Mary Magdalen Martinengo, was beatified this year (1900) on Pentecost Sunday, by His Holiness Leo XIII.

4. *SAINTS AND BLESSED OF THE ORDER.*

Considering the Rule professed by the Poor Clares, it is impossible that anyone following such a mode of life, should fail to reach an eminent degree of holiness and perfection, and that the Order has, in reality, been a school of Saints, is a well known fact. A great number of these heroic souls were at once proclaimed and honored as Saints by the common voice of the people on account of their evident holiness and astounding miracles. The veneration thus paid to these from time immemorial has been ratified and confirmed by the Holy See with regard to some of them. With regard to others, such a decision has not as yet been given. Still the number of those whom the Church has proposed to the public veneration of the faithful amounts to twenty-three, five of whom are honored with the title of Saints, and eighteen with the title of Blessed. Here is the list:

S. Clare of Assisi, Virgin, born 1194, died 1253, canonized by Pope Alexander IV. in 1255.

S. Agnes of Assisi, Virgin, born 1198, died 1253; her feast is observed in the Order of S. Francis by permission of Pope Benedict XIV.

S. Colette of Corbie, Virgin, born 1381, died 1447, canonized by Pope Pius VII. in 1807.

S. Catharine of Bologna, Virgin, born 1413, died 1463, canonized by Pope Clement XI.

S. Veronica Giuliani, Virgin, Poor Clare Capuchin, born 1660, died 1727, canonized by Pope Gregory XVI. in 1839.

B. Philippa Mareria, Virgin, born towards the close of the twelfth century, died 1236. The veneration paid her by the faithful even since her death, was confirmed by Pope Innocent IV. and Mass and Office granted in her honor by Pope Pius VII.

B. Helena Enselmini of Padua, Virgin, born 1208, died 1242. Pope Innocent XII. approved her veneration in 1695.

B. Salome, Virgin, born 1201, died 1268; her veneration was approved by Clement X.

B. Isabelle of France, Virgin, Urbanist, born 1225, died 1270, canonized by Pope Leo X. in 1521.

B. Agnes of Bohemia, Virgin, born 1200, died 1280; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius IX.

B. Margaret Colonna, Virgin, year of birth uncertain; died 1284.

B. Cunegunde, Virgin, born 1224, died 1292; her veneration was approved by Pope Alexander VIII.

B. Yolande, Widow, born 1235, died 1298; her veneration, already authorized by Pope Urban VIII. was confirmed by Pope Leo XII. in 1827.

B. Matthia of Nazzarei, Virgin, Urbanist, born 1234, died 1300; her veneration was approved by Pope Clement XIII. in 1765.

B. Clare of Rimini, Virgin, born 1282, died 1346; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius VI. in 1784.

B. Felicia Meda, Virgin, born 1378, died 1444; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius VII.

B. Antonia of Florence, Virgin, born 1401, died 1472; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius IX. in 1847.

B. Seraphina Sforza, Widow, born 1434, died 1478; her veneration was approved by Pope Benedict XIV.

B. Eustochium of Calafato, Virgin, born 1430, died 1484; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius VI.

B. Louisa of Savoy, Widow, Colettine, born 1461, died 1503; her veneration was approved by Pope Gregory XVI. in 1839.

B. Paula Montaldi of Mantua, Virgin, born 1443, died 1514; her veneration was approved by Pope Pius IX. in 1866.

B. Baptista Varani, Virgin, born 1458, died 1527; her veneration was approved by Pope Gregory XVI, in 1843.

B. Mary Magdalen Martinengo, Virgin, Poor Clare Capuchin, born 1687, died 1737, beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1900.

May the illustrious example of those holy Virgins and widows, together with the other faithful followers of the glorious Virgin S. Clare, whose names are inscribed in the Book of Life, encourage us in our present struggles here below, and may we experience the benefit of their powerful intercession before the throne of the Most High!

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5. *THE ORDER AT THE PRESENT DAY.*

RELIGIOUS orders being an integral part of the church, naturally share in her trials and triumphs. Whenever the church has been assailed, religious orders usually have had to bear the brunt of the battle; and the greatest glories of the church have, as a rule, been due to the influence of religious orders.

But religious orders are also affected in a way peculiar to themselves. That extraordinary fervor which attended the beginning and spread of every religious institute is generally of short duration. After a while these institutes settle down to a certain groove, traced out and hedged in by numerous precepts and regulations; but while this may be a necessity to safeguard the individual, it not seldom serves to depress and hamper the action of the entire body. Again, religious orders, just like individuals, have their periods of fervor and also their times of remissness. Sometimes, too, they may, on account of particular circumstances, deviate from their original plan and purpose, without, however, entirely losing their character of usefulness.

The Franciscan institutes being based on the gospels, are, like them, endowed with a certain inborn vitality to cope with all current evils and to be adaptable to the spirit and requirements of every age and clime without detriment to the original character impressed upon them by the Seraphic Founder. And history bears out this statement. From the time of S. Francis down to the present day, his three great orders have continued to exist, stamped with that characteristic trait of simplicity, penance, and poverty peculiar to them, being, at all times, most powerful factors for promoting the welfare of the people, both spiritual and temporal.

The Order of Poor Clares has had its own trials and difficulties. Revolutions and persecutions have at times decimated its monasteries. Sometimes the Religious were suppressed wholesale in some particular country. Their monasteries were confiscated, and the Sisters exiled from the land, after being subjected to many hardships and privations. Some were even put to death, or died in consequence of the sufferings they had to endure. Yet in spite of every obstacle the Order lives and flourishes at the present day throughout the Catholic world, animated everywhere with the spirit of S. Francis and of S. Clare.

It is not an easy matter to give an account of the order at the present day, owing to the difficulty in obtaining exact information. Mgr. Ricard in his illustrated life of S. Clare, published in Paris, 1895, makes an attempt to enumerate the monasteries of Poor Clares existing at present throughout the Catholic world. But he did not succeed completely. According to him there were in existance, in January, 1894, the following monasteries of Poor Clares:

In Italy, 83 monasteries, and several others, the names of which the author could not ascertain; in France, 47; in Belgium, 29; in Spain, over 100; in Portugal, only one monastery; one also on the Canary Islands, and one at Manilla,

on the Philippine Islands; in Germany, 4 monasteries and others, the names of which could not be ascertained; in Austria 2 monasteries and others the names of which could not be ascertained; in Syria, 2 monasteries; in England 7, in Ireland 7, in the United States 4, together with a number of other monasteries in South America, the names of which the author failed to ascertain. The author, therefore, enumerates 288 monasteries by name. But there are many others besides, the names of which could not be obtained.

As it would not be of much interest to the English-speaking public to give a detailed list of the Monasteries of the entire Order, we will merely state the Monasteries which at present (in 1900) exist in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as in the United States of North America.

The first settlement of Poor Claires in England since the Reformation was made by Religious expelled from France during the Revolution. After many difficulties and hardships, they took up their residence at Scorton Hall, near Catterick, Yorkshire, in November, 1807, where they remained until 1857, when they took possession of S. Clare's Abbey, at Darlington in Yorkshire, their present abode. The Nuns of this Abbey profess the Rule of S. Clare according to the modifications granted by Pope Urban.

There are seven other Monasteries of the Poor Clares who belong to the Reform of S. Colette. They are the following:

1st. At Baddesley Clinton, near Birmingham, in Warwickshire, founded August 22nd, 1850, from the Monastery of Poor Clares Colettines at Bruges, in Belgium.

2nd. At Nottinghill, Bayswater, London, likewise founded from Bruges, September 27th, 1857.

3rd. At Manchester, also founded from Bruges, July 16th, 1863.

4th. In York, also founded from Bruges, August 7th, 1865.

5th. At Bullingham, in West Hereford, founded from the Monastery at Bayswater, in London, November 4th, 1880.

6th. At Arundel, in Sussex, likewise founded from Bayswater September 7th, 1886.

7th. At Mount Alvernia, Liberton, Edinburgh, Scotland, founded July 2nd, 1895, from the Monastery at Baddesley Clinton, near Birmingham, in England.

In Ireland there are likewise eight Monasteries of Poor Clares. Only one of these, that at Carlow, founded from Manchester, in 1892, belongs to the Reform of S. Colette. The other six, those at Dublin, Armagh, Galway, Newry, Killarney, Kenmare and Ballyjamesduff, follow the Urbanist Rule.

About the year 1792, some Poor Clares, driven from France by the Revolution, came to this country and took up their abode at Georgetown, D. C. In 1801 they purchased a lot in Lafayette Street, Georgetown. But although they opened a school for their support, they did not succeed to found a permanent establishment, and upon the death of the Abbess, Madame Marie de la Marche, her successor, Madame de la Rochefoucault, sold the property, and with her companions returned to Europe.

Two or three other attempts were afterwards made to introduce the Order, but also unsuccessfully.

At the present day, there are five Monasteries of Poor Clares in the United States. The establishment of the Order is due to the courage and perseverance of two noble Ladies of Rome, Sisters by nature as well as in Religion, Sister Maria Maddalena Bentivoglio and Sister Maria Costanza Bentivoglio, who left their Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna in Rome, August 12th, 1875, in obedience to His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, and the most Reverend Father General of the Order. Their history up to the first permanent establishment is one of many sufferings, trials and disappointments. They first settled down in Cleveland.

But upon the arrival of the German Poor Clares in December 1877, they left the Home in Cleveland to the German Sisters and looked for shelter elsewhere. After another series of hardships, they succeeded to open a House at Omaha, Nebraska, August 15th, 1878. From this Monastery two other important foundations have been made since then at New Orleans, La., in June, 1885, and at Evansville, Ind., August 12th, 1897. From the Monastery at Cleveland, a foundation was made in Chicago. Hence we have the following Monasteries of Poor Clare:

1st. The Monastery of S. Clare, Hamilton and 29th Street, Omaha, Neb.

2nd. The Monastery of S. Clare, Magazine Street and Henry Clay Avenue, New Orleans, La.

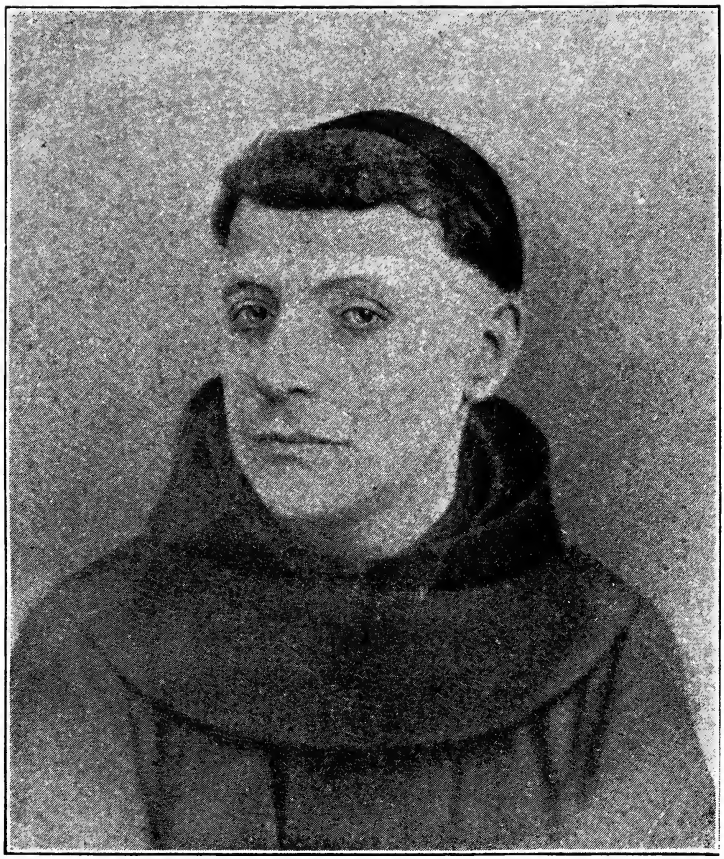
3rd. The Monastery of S. Clare, Kentucky Avenue, Evansville, Ind.

4th. The Monastery of Poor Clares, 246 Perry Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

5th. The Monastery of Poor Clares, 53rd and Laflin Streets, Chicago, Ill.

The Poor Clares of Cleveland and Chicago are Colettines, while the Sisters of the other three Monasteries, without calling themselves Colettines, follow the same strict mode of life.

The Order of Poor Clares throughout the Catholic world is, therefore, at the present day, of considerable importance and hence cannot be without its salutary influence. Who can tell the blessings and favors that are drawn upon a sinful world by the heroic life-long sacrifices of so many noble souls? If "the prayer of the just man availeth much with God" how powerful must not the prayer of these devoted spouses of Christ be! It is only at the last day that the world will fully know all it owes to the faithful



THE MOST REV. FATHER BERNARDINE OF PORTO-GRUARO, MINISTER GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR.

Born January 14, 1822; entered the Order November 7, 1839. Appointed Minister General by Pope Pius IX; made Titular Archbishop of Sardica by Pope Leo XIII; Died May 7, 1895.

(*From a Photo.*)

daughters of S. Clare. Blessed the land that is beautified and ennobled by the dwellings of these Angels of Peace! Blessed the city that has such powerful patrons and protectors!

PART THIRD.

Memoirs

OF THE

Coming of the Poor Clares to the United States of North America.

(Published on the occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of their arrival.)
1875-1900.

THE ORDER OF POOR CLARES HAS ALWAYS BEEN NOTED FOR ATTRACTING LADIES FROM THE HIGHEST RANKS IN SOCIETY.

IT IS quite a remarkable feature in the history of the Order of Poor Clares, that, in spite of its stringent poverty and rigorous austerities, it has, at all times, been eagerly sought after and embraced by ladies of the highest rank and position in society. It is surprising to see amongst its members such a vast array of Queens and Princesses, and other noble Dames, who voluntarily exchanged a life of wealth and luxury for one of poverty and penance. Yet while these illustrious personages reflect a certain lustre upon the Institute, by reason of the exalted station they occupied in the world, they themselves, however, will tell you

that, far from considering themselves as having added anything to the renown of the Order, they looked upon it as the highest honor and privilege to have been allowed to join its humble ranks. And in fact, we find that such individuals, as a rule, seemed to realize the life of a Poor Clare more than others, and were more conspicuous for their love of poverty, penance and humility. Another fact worth noticing is this, that the very superiority they enjoyed by nature and education, being ennobled and purified in the school of humility, made them better fitted for the government of Religious Communities; and, in this respect, they contributed largely to the spread and advancement of the Order. The establishment of the Order of Poor Clares in this country is another illustration of the truth of these remarks.

ANNETTA AND COSTANZA BENTIVOGLIO.

Several attempts had been made to introduce the Order of Poor Clares into this country; but they proved unsuccessful. The work of firmly establishing the Order was reserved, in the decrees of Divine Providence, to two members of a noble family in Rome.

Their names, before entering the Order, were Annetta and Costanza Bentivoglio. Their parents were Domenico Bentivoglio, a count of Bologna, and Angela Sandred, who descended from a French family.

Count Domenico fought in the wars under Napoleon I., holding the rank of a colonel. After Napoleon's defeat, he returned to his palatial residence in Bologna, but soon afterwards removed with his family to Rome at the request of Pope Gregory XVI. He served as general in the Papal army and did service both under Gregory XVI. and Pius IX. He passed through eventful days, and many interesting facts could be related concerning his career.

He died, December 26, 1851, at the age of seventy. His wife followed him some years later, March 16, 1860, being sixty-four years of age.

God had blessed their marriage union with a numerous offspring. They had sixteen children. Four of them died in their infancy. Of the remaining twelve, there were five boys and seven girls. Some are still living.

The oldest son, Luigi Bentivoglio, became a member of the noble guard of Pope Pius IX. He married in 1850, and, some time after, retired to private life, returning to his family seat in Bologna. He died in 1878. The family is still extant.

The two eldest daughters, Agatha and Paola, were placed for their education in the monastery of the Poor Clares Urbanists of San Silvestro-in-capite, founded by Blessed Margaret Colonna. When the Venerable Madeleine Barat, founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart, came to Rome to open a House of her Institute, she lived for a time in the monastery of San Silvestro. Here she made the acquaintance of the Bentivoglio family, whose intimate friend she ever afterward remained. And as soon as she had succeeded in establishing herself in the Monastery of the Trinità de' Monti, which had formerly been a Monastery of the Minnims, founded by S. Francis of Paola, Agatha hastened to join the Institute, and her sisters were sent there for their education.

Out of the seven girls, two contracted marriage; the other five became Religious. Two entered the Society of the Sacred Heart, one joined the Oblates of San Francesca Romana at the foot of the Campidoglio, and two, namely, Annetta and Costanza, became Poor Clares.

Annetta, the twelfth child, was born July 29th, 1834. Costanza was the fourteenth child, and was born November 19th, 1838. Both were placed at an early age in the Monastery of the Trinità. Annetta was five years old. Cos-

tanza counted but three. Annetta remained in Rome three years and then was sent to a house of the same Society in Turin, where her sister Agatha was teaching. She remembers travelling on that occasion from Rome to Turin in the company of Madame Barat. At Turin, she remained until 1848, when, terrified by the revolutionary disturbances of the times, she returned to her family in Rome.

Costanza was the first to join the Order of Poor Clares. She was received in the Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna in Rome, May 1st, 1864, under the name of Sister Maria Costanza di Gesù ; and was professed the year following, on the third of May.

Annetta soon followed her to the cloister. She received the habit on the feast of the Patriarch S. Francis, in the same year of 1864, and made her religious profession the same day of the following year. She exchanged her name for that of Sister Maria Maddalena di Sacro Cuor di Gesù.

In 1870, at the suppression of the Religious in Italy, the Poor Clares of the Monastery of San Lorenzo, were restricted to a small portion of the Monastery, the rest of the building being appropriated by government for a public school for medical students ; and in 1880 even this small portion was taken from them. The cells of the Nuns were pulled down to make room for improvements. The poor Sisters were compelled, by the order of government, to seek shelter among the Oblates of the Holy Child. Here they were expelled a second time and placed among the Augustinian Nuns of Santa Lucia-in-Selci, where they are living at the present day, hoping, that, with the aid of some generous friends, they may, one day, have again the happiness of dwelling in a monastery of their own.

It was in 1875, that Sister Maria Maddalena and Sister Maria Costanza left Rome to come to this country. The history of their trials and wanderings up to the time of the cannonical establishment of the Monastery in Omaha has

been faithfully chronicled by the two Sisters. We have deemed it useful and interesting to give their narrative verbatim, omitting a few things of minor importance, and making certain verbal alterations demanded by the idiom of the English language.

Memoirs

Written by Sisters Maria Maddalena and Maria Costanza.

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD,
HERE BEGIN THE CHRONICLES SET DOWN IN WRITING BY
SISTERS MARIA MADDALENA AND MARIA COSTANZA.

Preface.

Though it be one of the duties of our office to keep a record of the chief events which happened since our departure from the Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna, Rome, Italy, until the canonical erection of our humble Monastery of S. Clare, Eden Hill, Omaha, Nebraska, we, nevertheless, had some hesitation in doing so, lest it might give rise to any self-complacency in the good that has been accomplished. Yet what have we in which to glory save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Therefore, while raising our eyes towards heaven whence every blessing descends, and returning humble thanks to our heavenly Father Who has ever been our guide and support; yielding moreover to the entreaties of our elder daughters in Religion who, together with us, have borne the heats and the burden of the day: we now commence these chronicles on this, the twelfth day of August, 1883, the feast of our glorious Mother S. Clare.

God detests pride and presumption, yet is not opposed to the setting forth of the wonderful things He performs amongst men by His grace. Our Lord Himself did not wish

MOTHER MARY MAGDALENE,
OF THE SACRED HEART.
Annette Bentivoglio.
Abbess of the Monastery of S. Clare, Evansville, Ind.

(*From a Photo taken in 1900.*)

MOTHER MARY CONSTANCE OF JESUS.
Constance Bentivoglio.
Vicaress of the Monastery of S. Clare, Omaha, Neb.

(*From a Photo in 1900.*)

that His disciples should hide their light under a bushel, but that they should let it shine before men, so that men might glorify their Father Who is in heaven.

Hence in recording these events, we wish to make known the goodness and mercy of God, and to induce all who may hereafter read these memoirs, to join us in praising and glorifying God for all His tender mercies.

Glory to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Glory to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!
Glory to the ever-blessed Servants of God,
Francis and Clare,
Together with all the Angels and Saints of the heavenly Court!
For ever! Amen

Preliminary Remarks.

The Viminal Hill.

We should rightly be deserving of blame, if, in writing these memoirs, we should fail to give an account of our Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna, where we had the happiness of consecrating ourselves to God, and whence we started to come to this country.

San Lorenzo is situated on the Viminal Hill, one of the seven hills upon which the city of Rome is built. The hill derived its name from the quantity of osiers, in Latin called *Vimina*, a species of water-willows that grew upon the place. There stood an ancient altar, dedicated to Jupiter, called the Viminal altar. The hill remained thickly wooded and inhabited only by wild beasts until Servius Tullius, the sixth King of Rome, when enlarging the city, enclosed it within its walls.

The Viminal Hill became renowned for a number of magnificent buildings that were erected upon it, amongst which may be mentioned the Thermæ, or Baths, of Agrippina, wife of the Emperor Claudius and mother of Nero, the palaces of Marcus Crassus and Quintus Catulus and the mansions of Caius Aquilus and the Roman Senator Pudens.[1]

The Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna.

That which rendered the Viminal Hill famous for all ages is the glorious martyrdom of S. Lawrence which took place upon its site.

(1) S. Peter raised to life his son Timotheus, upon which the whole family became Christian. The noble Senator then invited S. Peter to take up his residence in his house. This S. Peter did, and there consecrated his first altar, and offered up the Holy Sacrifice. The little chapel he then used was afterwards developed into one of the most remarkable shrines in early Christianity, and bore the title: *Ad Pastorem*. It is known under the name of the Church of San Pudenziana, one of the granddaughters of the noble Pudens.

A fierce persecution had broken out against the Christians under the Emperior Valerian. The onslaught was made mainly upon bishops and priests. The Holy Pontiff, Sixtus II., was seized, and, upon refusing to sacrifice to Mars, was condemned to death. As he was being dragged away, the holy deacon, S. Lawrence, ran to meet him, and cried out with grief: "Father, whither goest thou without thy son? Holy Priest, why doest thou depart without thy deacon?" Sixtus answered: "I am not leaving thee, my son. There awaits thee, for Christ's sake, a sterner combat than mine. Yet three days and thou shalt follow me, the deacon behind the priest. And in the meanwhile, if thou hast anything in the treasury, give it to the poor." Lawrence obeyed, and the tyrant, being baffled, both by losing the treasures of the church, as well as by failing to rob Lawrence of his faith, after having subjected him to a number of appalling tortures, finally ordered him to be taken to the imperial gardens on the Viminal Hill and there to be roasted upon a large grid-iron over a slow fire. Thus the glorious martyr rendered his beautiful soul to God, August 10th, 258. His sacred remains were deposited in the catacombs of S. Cyriacus outside the city walls; and, when about sixty years later peace was restored to the church, by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, one of the first solicitudes of Pope S. Silvester was to render the place of the martyrdom of S. Lawrence memorable by the erection of a magnificent Church upon the very ruins of the palace of the Emperor Valerian. A Monastery of Benedictine Monks was soon constructed in connection with the Church. The Benedictines inhabited the place until the thirteenth century. When they left, it was given to the daughters of S. Clare. This took place shortly after the death of the Seraphic S. Francis. Here the Poor Clares lived humble and exemplary lives. Here also, in a hospice attached to the monastery, S. Bridget of Sweden, a member of the Third Order of S. Francis, having contracted

a fever upon her return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, breathed her last, upon the 23d day of July, in 1372. Her body was buried in the Church of San Lorenzo. When she was canonized by Pope Boniface IX,[1] her daughter, Queen Catherine of Sweden, reclaimed her body, leaving to the Monastery the relic of her shoulder and right arm with which she had written the famous revelations.

The Monastery of San Cosimato.

There existed still another Monastery of Poor Clares in Rome. In the month of September, 1234, our holy Mother S. Clare sent four of her Religious, Giacoma, Rugiera, Margerita, and Francesca, to Rome, where Pope Gregory IX,[2] formerly Cardinal Ugolino, gave them the Monastery of SS. Cosmas and Damian, commonly called San Cosimato, which had also belonged to the Benedictines.

The primitive observance of the Rule which these Religions brought with them from Assisi was always maintained in full vigor. The odor of their holy lives soon drew a number of ladies from the noble families of Rome who hastened to be received into the new Order. There were the Savelli, Colonna, Conti, Gaetani, Caraffa, Orsini, Farnese, and numerous others.

This was the first monastery in Rome in which strict canonical enclosure was observed.

In 1475, Pope Sixtus IV.,[3] renewed the Monastery from its foundations.

When, in the course of time the Religious of San Lorenzo had deviated from the strict observance of the Rule, Pope Leo X,[4] in the year 1517, chose fourteen Nuns of exemplary lives from the Monastery of San Cosimato and sent them to San Lorenzo to introduce the primitive observance of the

(1) 1389-1404. (2) 1227-1241. (3) 1471-1484. (4) 1513-1521.

First Rule of S. Clare. Their efforts were attended with wonderful success.

ACCOUNT OF THE EDIFYING LIVES OF SOME SISTERS OF SAN LORENZO.

For the edification of our Religious, we will give a few particulars to illustrate the holiness and perfection of some of the Nuns who lived at San Lorenzo at that period.

* * *

Sister Violante Savelli, by birth a Roman princess, was of most exemplary conduct. She received the habit of the Order at San Cosimato. During her novitiate, she was grievously tempted to pusillanimity, thinking she would never be able to persevere in the observance of the Rule. This affliction caused her great sadness and despondency. Yet she bravely battled against the temptation, praying earnestly for strength and support. Being one night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, it seemed to her that a gleam of fire suddenly burst forth from the tabernacle, and rested upon her head. From that moment, all fear and timidity vanished, and, ever afterwards she excelled all the rest in the exact observance of the Religious life. Having reached the advanced age of one hundred years, she still attended midnight office, remaining standing the whole time, without ever leaning against anything for support.

* * *

Sister Beatrice Scapuci was another one of the fourteen Sisters that had come from San Cosimato. She was of such holiness that she was favored with heavenly visions. Like our glorious Mother S. Clare, she, too, once saved the Monastery from invasion. It was in 1527, when the City of Rome was being pillaged, for two months, by the army of

Charles of Bourbon. Being in prayer with the Sisters, and beseeching God most fervently for aid, she suddenly beheld S. Michael, the Archangel, together with the glorious martyr, S. Lawrence, and the holy martyrs, SS. Cosmas and Damian, in the act of defending the Monastery. And indeed, help was sorely needed. Some of the soldiers had already scaled the enclosure walls and burst into the choir, when their eyes were attracted by the costly adornments of a Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Holy Child. Blinded with avarice they mounted ladders to rob the treasure, when suddenly they were hurled to the ground by an irresistible force, and thereupon fled in dismay. No harm was done to any of the Sisters, though, at that critical moment, they were all assembled in the choir.

* * *

Sister Theodora of Veroli also came from the Monastery of San Cosimato. She was frequently rapt into ecstacy by reason of her intimate intercourse with God. Sometimes she was raised up bodily into the air.

* * *

Sister Armenia, a disciple of Sister Theodora, was noted for her exceeding great humility which made her undertake the lowliest services in the community, though she belonged to the distinguished family of De Rossi. Her love of holy poverty was so great that she would never wear anything but an old and patched habit. Her fervor in prayer was extraordinary, and, in her night watches, she was especially fond of meditating upon the sufferings of her Divine Redeemer.

* * *

She had a sister who followed her to the cloister and took the name of Eugenia. *Sister Eugenia* imitated her saintly sister in everything, especially in patience, self-contempt, and fervor in prayer. Having reached the end of her life, at the advanced age of ninety-three, she was found by

the Chaplain who had entered the enclosure to hear her confession, so deeply absorbed that she seemed to be asleep. Being roused, she said: "God forgive you, Father, for you have interrupted me in a great consolation." Being questioned what she meant, she said she had been favored with holding in her arms the holy Infant.

* * *

Sister Pacifica, Sister Mary Saralli, and *Sister Philippa Corti,* all three of noble birth, were very remarkable for self-abasement, fervor in prayer, rigor in fasting and abstinence, and the scrupulous observance of the regular life. They died in the odor of sanctity.

* * *

Sister Paola Paoli of Rome was distinguished for her eminent holiness of life. Out of love for holy Poverty, she never had but one habit, the same she had received upon entering the Order. This she mended whenever it was necessary so that, in the end, it was nothing but one mass of patches. When she died, nothing was found to give the Sisters as a keepsake but her beads which the Chaplain divided, giving a grain to each Religious. She spent all the time she could upon the exercise of prayer, for which purpose she never allowed herself any repose after Matins. Being one day absorbed in prayer in her cell, she suddenly beheld heaven open and heard a voice, saying: "Behold the splendors of paradise prepared for thee and all the faithful observers of the Holy Rule."

* * *

Sister Constance of Rome was favored with the gift of miracles even in her childhood. There was a poor blind girl of the age of four. Constance felt deeply moved with compassion for her. She invited the child to her home and in the evening at the ringing of the angelus, she placed the child against a window from which the statue of the Blessed Virgin could be seen above the door of the church of Aracoeli.

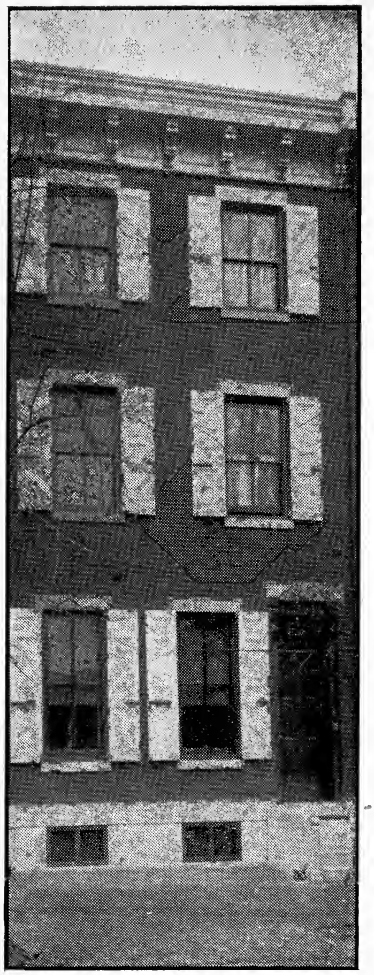
At the same time she bathed the eyes of the child with holy water and recited one Our Father and Hail Mary. On the the third evening the child was found to be perfectly healed. Constance was then eleven years old. Shortly after, she entered the Monastery of Poor Clares at San Lorenzo, where she made wonderful advance in every virtue; yet the chief feature always remained that extraordinary confidence in God by which she performed the most marvelous things. One day, a number of casks of wine were found to be spoiled to the great grievance of the Mother Abbess. Sister Constance sprinkled the casks with holy water, and not only was the wine restored to its former state, but found to be even better than it had been before.

* * *

Sister Dorothea of Campaniano was noted for her great spirit of humility and poverty. She was particularly devout to the Passion of our Lord, shedding abundant tears at the contemplation of His sufferings. She healed a number of sick by the mere touch of her hand.

* * *

Sister Giacinta of Venice was reputed as a Saint from her very childhood by all who came in contact with her. She came to Rome in order to obtain the Holy Father's blessing before setting out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Cardinal Teatino (afterwards Pope under the name of Paul IV.), who happened to be present at the audience, persuaded her to become a Poor Clare in the Monastery of San Lorenzo. She consented, and if, in the world, she was renowned for holiness, she now became still more so in the cloister. She practiced great austerities, observed rigorous fasts, was assiduous in prayer and meditation and diligent in the observance of the Holy Rule. At her death, she was consoled by a vision of our Divine Lord, and exclaiming several times: "Oh! how lovely Thou art, O, my Jesus! Oh, how lovely!" she expired and went to heaven.



RESIDENCE OF THE POOR CLARES
AT PHILADELPHIA, PA.

FROM OCTOBER 9, TO OCTOBER 30, 1876.

[*From a Photo,*]

Sister Agnes Mattei was so intent upon prayer, that she truly prayed without ceasing. Each time, she awoke during the night, she would recite five Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honor of the Five Wounds of our Blessed Redeemer. She never grew weary of reading the Passion of our Lord, weeping over it so bitterly, that her eyes became as two fountains of tears. In memory of His bitter Passion, she wore an iron chain around her neck and a rough cincture around her waist. She was very exact in the observance of the regulations of the house, being the first at all the community exercises. Being called by God, she passed away cheerfully.

* * *

Sister Seraphina Mantica was adorned with every virtue. She was especially devoted to prayer, consecrating to this exercise all the time she could spare both day and night. Hence after Matins, she remained in the choir, watching and praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Thus, she was as one of the prudent Virgins, ever ready with her lamp trimmed, watching for the coming of the bridegroom. She, likewise, was most zealous for the observance of the Holy Rule. She was also remarkable for the love of silence. She never spoke an idle word. In fact, she never opened her mouth, unless it was to praise God, or when demanded for the service of her neighbor. She passed away to our Lord in the Monastery of San Lorenzo.

* * *

Sister Cherubina Boccapaduli was of exemplary conduct. Her greatest delight consisted in consoling and serving the sick Sisters. The remainder of her time was given to prayer. Our Lord was pleased to visit her with a long sickness. She became so crippled, that she could hardly move without the greatest difficulty. Yet she bore her sufferings with wonderful patience and cheerfulness.

Sister Gabriella of Campiano was noted for her zeal for Religious Observance. Being at prayer, one day, in her cell, she was favored with a vision of the heavenly paradise and heard a voice, saying- "Behold the happiness, in store for you and all those who will be faithful in observing the Holy Rule." This vision she told to no one until the end of her life, when she revealed it to the Abbess.

* * *

These accounts, together with many other interesting items concerning our Monastery of San Lorenzo, are to be found in a manuscript preserved in the archives of the Franciscan convent of Aracoeli in Rome. We will add two more facts, related to us during our Novitiate by Sister Teresa Mary Cecconi, the Mistress of Novices.

* * *

The first is concerning a member of the princely family of the Altieri in Rome. This Sister was charged by obedience to feed the fowl, a duty rather heavy for one so delicate as she was, having been reared in luxury and waited upon for the least thing in her own palatial home. Having to carry, one day, a heavy basket, her strength gave way, and, in her despondency, turned her eyes to heaven and complained internally that she was compelled to attempt things beyond her strength. Lowering her eyes, she beheld a strange sight. She saw a boy, of about twelve years of age, of wondrous beauty, running along with a heavy cross on his shoulders, dragging after him a basket full of carpenter's tools. Full of pity, she ran up to the boy, offering to help him to carry the burden, as she was much stronger than he. "How can you help me to carry the cross, since a small basket exhausts all your strength." And with this, the vision disappeared. The Sister understood the lesson, and was never afterwards heard to complain about any work, however burdensome it might be. In remembrance of this

favor, she caused the Holy Infant Jesus to be painted just as she had seen Him. The painting was kept in our Novitiate; and often, while looking at it, we felt ourselves strengthened and consoled in the discharge of our duties.

* * *

The other fact is of a more recent date. There was a Sister, belonging to the Celini family of Bologna, who had been placed in the Monastery at a tender age. Being enamored with the Religious life, she entered the Order, much against the wishes of her parents, and made her solemn profession at the age of sixteen. God, Who chastises those whom He loves, soon visited her with a dreadful malady. Though possessed outwardly of striking beauty, which never lessened, she was inwardly consumed with a malignant cancer which caused her intense suffering. Being compelled by obedience to place herself in the hands of a surgeon, she suffered a still greater martyrdom by reason of her maiden modesty. This she bore for ten years; and the Sister infirmarian relates how, upon hearing the bell announce the entrance of the surgeon, the poor Sister would commence to tremble and shake through fear and repugnance. She edified all by her manifest holiness which showed itself in a thousand ways. At her death, a fragrant odor was exhaled from her body as of a variety of the most sweet-smelling flowers, in token, as it were, of her many virtues. This wonderful fragrance pervaded the whole house, and greatly consoled all the Religious, who were thus assured of possessing a new intercessor before the throne of God. We knew of some Sisters yet living who had seen her and lived with her.

* * *

From this Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna, Sisters were sent, from time to time, to found Houses of the Order in different parts of the world. Thus, in the year 1397, under the Pontificate of Boniface IX., Sister Katherine

Negroni with four other Sisters, was sent to establish a Monastery of Poor Clares in Genoa, in Italy. In 1618, Sister Isabella, and the Venerable Sister Francesca Farnese, established Monasteries of the Poor Clares at Palestrina, Albano, and in Rome, where they were known under the appellation of *Sepolte vive.*[1] And on the twelfth day of August, in the year 1875, under the Pontificate of Pope Pius IX., the two Sisters Maria Maddalena and Maria Costanza Bentivoglio, left their Monastery of San Lorenzo to go to North America.

[1] *i. e.* buried alive.

I.

Departure From Rome.

MOTHER IGNATIUS HAYES.

Mother Mary Ignatius Hayes [1] a member of the Third Order Regular of S. Francis, had arrived in Italy for the purpose of engaging Sisters of the Third Order who, by reason of the suppression of Religious Houses, had been deprived of their homes, and who would be willing to return with her to America and establish a House at Belle Prairie, near S. Cloud, Minnesota. But she was unsuccessful. Being unable to secure Sisters of the Third Order, she thought she would try the Poor Clares, or members of the Second Order. With this idea she went to Rome, in June, 1875, and laid her plans before His Eminence Patrizi, the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, and the Most Rev. Father Bernardine of Portogruaro, Minister General of the Franciscan Order, both of whom approved her views and encouraged her in her undertaking. Thus she came to our Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna. Quite a number of Sisters, at once, declared themselves ready to accompany her to America and establish the Order in that country. But some were opposed to it, and even attempted to discourage and dissuade those who were anxious to go, and in this, they were joined by some of the Franciscan Fathers, and other ecclesiastics of high standing. But the Sisters kept to their generous resolution in spite of all opposition. A few more Religious from other Monasteries, too, volunteered to join them. Out of these, the Minister

[1] When Dr. Herbert Vaughan, the present Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, London, England, established the Society of S. Joseph for Foreign Missions, at Mill Hill, outside London, there existed, close by, a community of Protestant Nuns, who simultaneously conceived the desire of becoming Catholics and of continuing the Religious life. Dr. Vaughan received them into the Church and gave them some land in connection with Mill Hill, where they established themselves under the Rule of the Third Order Regular of S. Francis. It was to this community that Mother Mary Ignatius Hayes belonged.

General selected only three Sisters whom he deemed suited for the undertaking, two from the Monastery of San Lorenzo, namely, Maria Maddalena Bentivoglio of Bologna, and her sister Maria Costanza Bentivoglio, and one from the Monastery of San Cosimato, called Chiara Francesca Martinetti of Partina in Tuscany. Petitions were then drawn up and placed before the Holy Father to obtain his apostolic sanction.

THE CHOICE OF THE HOLY FATHER.

In the petition presented to His Holiness by Mother Ignatius Hayes, she sets forth how everything was favorable for the establishment of the Poor Clares in Belle Prairie. The Bishop had given his full consent; the people of the surrounding district, being entirely Catholics, were anxious to have the Poor Clares in their midst; a Church and Monastery already existed with sufficient land for the needs of the community; and the circumstances were such as to allow the Sisters to observe the strict Rule of S. Clare in its primitive rigor. She proposed that the community was to consist of Professed Religious, living in strict enclosure, under the First Rule of S. Clare, and of Testiary Lay-Sisters, living outside the enclosure. The former were to devote themselves to Perpetual Adoration and the making of Sacred Vestments and Altar Linen, according to the traditional spirit of their holy Mother S. Clare; the latter were to attend to the temporalities of the Institution. A Franciscan Father, to be appointed by the Minister General, was to accompany them, and attend to their spiritual needs.

In another petition, His Holiness was asked to grant the three Sisters, whose names had been proposed to him by the Minister General, the requisite permission to leave the en-

closure of their respective Monasteries and to proceed to North America with a view of establishing a community of Poor Clares in the place already offered them for that purpose.

When the petitions were placed before the Holy Father, he said he would need some time for mature deliberation, as it was a matter of grave importance. After a few days, the decision of His Holiness arrived. He had chosen the two Sisters Bentivoglio of San Lorenzo. "These Sisters," he said, "will have many sufferings to endure, and many trials and hardships to pass through. And it is better to have two Sisters of the same family, as they can encourage and console each other better."

The decision was promulgated by Cardinal Alexander Franchi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, in a Rescript, dated July 1st, 1875; and the Minister General of the Order was expressly charged to appoint one of his Religious to accompany the Sisters on their journey, and to make all necessary arrangements.

In Virtue of Holy Obedience.

In compliance with the command of His Holiness, the Most Reverend Father Bernardine, Minister General of the Order, commissioned the Rev. Father Paolino of Castellaro, a learned and prudent Religious, to act as spiritual adviser of the Sisters and of the community to be established, granting him ample faculties to make whatever provisions he would deem expedient for the observance of the Religious Life.

The same Minister issued letters of obedience by which he commanded the two Sisters Maria Maddalena and Maria Costanza, in virtue of Holy Obedience, to depart from their Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna, Rome, and to repair to North America, to the place already designated, and

establish a Monastery of the Order according to the primative observance of the First Rule of S. Clare.

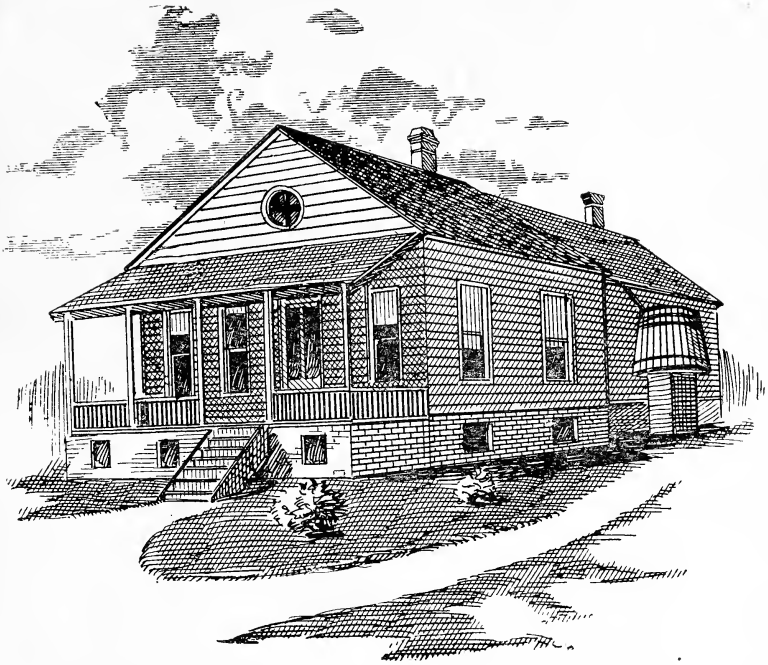
He, furthermore, appointed Sister Maria Maddalena Mother Abbess of the new foundation, or of any other foundation to be made, granting her all the rights and privileges, commonly enjoyed by such Superiors of the Order.

He expressly ordained that, in the new foundation, or foundations, the First Rule of S. Clare should be strictly adhered to, especially in the things relating to the observance of absolute Poverty.

In another writing, he recommended the Sisters and their Director to the paternal solicitude of the American Episcopacy; and a special Decree was drawn up by him, embodying all these enactments, to serve as a perpetual record of the matter.

Farewell to San Lorenzo.

When it was definitely settled that we should leave, we, at once, began to get ready, packing up the the things that would be needful for the journey. This we had to do at night so as not to aggrieve the Sisters. Good Sister Teresa, who had always been very attentive to our needs, gave us all the assistance she could, though she did so amidst many tears. Mother Mary Clare Papi, who was then Abbess of the community, was altogether opposed to our going, and said she would have nothing to do with the matter. But it so happened, that, on the 28th of July, the election of our new Superior took place, and God permitted that Sister Clare Frances Simonetti should be elected Mother Abbess for the following three years. The new Abbess, though sorry to see us depart, made no opposition, and we thanked God, that now we were not obliged to leave the Monastery



First House of the Poor Clares at New Orleans, La.
From March 13, to August 4, 1877.

[*From a Sketch.*]

without the blessing and good will of our Mother Abbess.

On the evening of August 11th, the Rev. Father Anacletus entered the enclosure for the purpose of hearing the confession of the Sisters, who lay sick in the infirmary. Just at that moment, Mother Abbess received the Rescript of Propaganda, sent by His Eminence, the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. Upon seeing the Rescript, Father Anacletus, without meaning to hurt our feelings, commenced to chide us for leaving our good Mother and Sisters and going to a strange far-off country. This rendered our leaving still more painful. Yet we knew, we were doing God's will, not our own.

Everything was now ready. In the morning of August 12th, we arose as usual and went to the Chapel where, for the last time, we received the General Absolution imparted on account of the solemnity of the day, it being the feast of our glorious Mother S. Clare. It was fifteen minutes to six. At half past six, Father Paolino, together with Mother Ignatius Hayes, came to take us away. We knelt at the entrance of the enclosure, and once more asked the blessing of our beloved Mother Abbess. We then embraced the Sisters who were with us, and, with a heavy heart, took leave of our beloved Monastery of San Lorenzo-in-Panisperna. But it was in the body only. For our hearts are still united to the dear Sisters whom we left behind us in that Monastery.

A HAPPY RE-UNION

From San Lorenzo, we went to the Trinità de' Monti, where, in accordance with a previous appointment, Cardinal Franchi had promised to say Mass for us. Here we had the great happiness of meeting again our beloved sisters Agatha

and Alphonsa, who were now both Religious of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and whom we had not seen for quite a number of years. Our youngest sister Mathilda, who afterwards joined the Oblates of San Francesca of Rome, was there likewise. It was indeed a happy family re-union. Here we found ourselves again in the Monastery, where we had been educated, and where the first seeds of Divine Love had been implanted in our hearts. Here we beheld again our beloved Mothers and Teachers, whom we had known and loved from our childhood.

During the holy Mass, we five sisters approached the altar to receive Holy Communion, together with the community and several children of Mary. These were happy moments. Our hearts were filled with deep and holy emotions.

After Mass, we paid our respects to Cardinal Franchi. His Eminence spoke to us very kindly, and encouraged us to remain steadfast in our purpose. He said, he would see us again that morning at 11 o'clock, which hour had been appointed for an audience with the Holy Father.

In Audience With the Holy Father.

At half past ten, two carriages drove up to convey us to the Vatican. In the first carriage was Father Paolino with Mother Ignatius; in the other were we five sisters. Arrived at the Vatican, we were admitted to the Throne Hall and there, with anxious expectations, we looked forward to the appearance of the Holy Father. At length, about a few minutes after eleven, the great door opened, and the Holy Father entered, accompanied by Cardinal Franchi and other distinguished Prelates. We were on our knees. Along with ourselves were a number of other visitors, waiting

for an audience. The Holy Father upon entering the Hall, said in a loud voice: "I wish to see my children; where are they?" Then looking round, he perceived the two Poor Clares, and his face brightened up with a paternal smile. He then made his round passing from group to group, everywhere imparting his blessing and saying a few kind affectionate words. At last he came towards us. Perceiving the two Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and knowing who they were, he said to them: "You will remain at the Trinità." "But you, my dear children," he said, turning towards us, "you will proceed to America." He then gave us his ring to kiss, and affectionately bending over us, he blessed us, just like a tender father who is bidding farewell to his children. Then in a loud voice, he addressed to us these memorable words:

"When Saint Mary Magdalen arrived at Marseilles after the death of our Lord, she found herself alone and without consolation. Thereupon she betook herself to a grotto, and penetrating deeply into its recesses, she gave herself up to prayer and union with God. There, by dint of fervent supplications and great austerities, she never ceased beseeching God to deign to enlighten the people of Marseilles with the Light of Divine Truth; for they were still pagans. You, too, will go to a distant land, where men are to be found, who are the same as pagans, living and dying without Baptism. You will indeed find men of great wealth, men devoted to traffic and speculation, interested in all things material and ever looking forward to temporal advantages. But as for the soul, you will find men taking little or no interest. And as for the higher forms of the spiritual life, a life devoted exclusively to prayer and contemplation, the bare idea thereof is treated with derision and contempt by many. You, my dear daughters, must be to the people of your new home an example by your detachment from all earthly things. This will be to them a silent preaching, which, together with your prayers and your communion with God, will obtain for many souls the grace to understand that true happiness is not found in material and temporal things. And thus penetrating with Mary Magdalen ever more deeply into the recesses

of the grotto, to commune with your heavenly Bridegroom, you will find therein light, peace, and comfort in compensation for the privations which, for His love, you have taken upon yourselves; whilst upon others you will draw down God's blessing in abundance and obtain the grace of conversion for many a poor soul."

Then His Holiness, turning kindly to Dr. Chatard,[1] who was, at that time, Rector of the American College in Rome, and who had come on purpose to be present at this audience, said: "In this way, we shall console the good Fr. Rector and his American friends, since he has so deeply interested himself in the success of this work." And presenting us each with a silver medal of the Immaculate Conception, he said: "Have courage, my children! Behold, I place you into the keeping of the Immaculate Mother of God. She will protect you upon your journey."

Our companions likewise received a little medal from His Holiness in memory of the occasion.

As the Holy Father showed himself so kind and affable, Sister Maria Costanza took courage to say to him: "Holy Father, give us a special blessing, as we wish to become Saints." At this, His Holiness smiled and replied: "My children what good will you do, if you do not become Saints. But what have you got there? And what do you wish?" Sister Costanza held in her hand a portrait of the Holy Father and begged of him to write beneath the picture a blessing for themselves and all the future Poor Clares of America.[2] "But now I cannot write," said he, "unless you want me to write with my stick." And suiting the action to the words, he, in his well known affability, raised the stick, pretending to write. "But leave the picture, he said, "with my Secretary, and your desire will be granted."

After this the Holy Father went to the middle of the

[1] Francis Silas Chatard, D. D., was consecrated Bishop of Vincennes (title of which diocese was, in 1898, changed to that of Indianapolis) May 12th, 1878.

[2] A copy of this picture with the blessing written by the Pope's own hand, is given among the illustrations.

Hall, where he bestowed his apostolic blessing upon all the people present, extending the same to their families at home. He, likewise, blessed and indulgenced, with his own hands, the medals, rosaries, crucifixes and other pious objects of devotion the people had brought with them for that purpose.

Then he, once more, approached us and most lovingly gave us a special blessing, after which he solemnly added: "My dear children! May this blessing accompany you wherever you go! May it give you strength to persevere in your undertaking! And may it be to you a promise of a crown of glory in eternity!" Making once more the sign of the cross over us, he departed, leaving us deeply touched at his truly paternal affection, and filled with courage to do God's holy will.

Farewell Visits in Rome.

After the audience, we went to S. Peter's. Here we prayed most fervently at the Shrine of the Holy Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, imploring their aid in the great work before us.

We had a pleasant mid-day meal at the Villa Lante, the Novitiate of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Here we received the visits of a number of friends who came to bid us farewell.

In the afternoon we went to the Church of the Gesù, where our beloved parents lay buried. Here, prostrate upon the stone slab that bears the inscription of their dear names, we prayed long and fervently for those who, in life, had been our models in the service of God. We blessed and thanked God, again and again, for having given us such good pious parents.

We then went to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore

and to a number of other memorable sanctuaries in Rome. In the evening, we returned to the Trinità de' Monti.

Next day, Friday, August 13th, we rose early to assist at Holy Mass in the Chapel of the Children of Mary. The Rev. Father, in his brief address to the children, also gave us a few words of encouragement. At seven o'clock, Dr. Chatard came to celebrate Mass for us at the altar of the Mater Admirabilis. After Mass, we waited upon Dr. Chatard who spoke to us with great kindness and left us with his blessing. The rest of the morning was spent with several more visits.

After dinner, Mother Cesarie Bouchaud, Superior of the Trinità, came to take us again to the Chapel of the Children of Mary. Upon our entrance the children sang the Magnificat, after which they surrounded us to give us their good wishes which we returned with a good heart.

Then the Mother Superior begged us to be present at the public reading of the community. Here a surprise was awaiting us. We were seated around the Mother Superior. Mother Bois, who had been one of our Teachers, then arose and commenced to read from the "Fioretti" or Little Flowers of S. Francis. At a given point, she stopped, upon which, at the end of the hall, a curtain was suddenly raised, and a most magnificent sight revealed itself to our view. There we saw a most splendid transparent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was surrounded with banners of the Seraphic Order. Beautiful flowers, arranged in costly vases, were grouped all around. Below it, there was the picture of two hearts entwined together, surrounded by our family name, Bentivoglio. This was supposed to stand for us, offering to the Divine Heart the homage of our love.[1] Mother Mary Macchi, one of our old school-mates then addressed, in our name, the Sacred Heart of Jesus in verses composed by herself. Behind the transparent stood Mother Julia Filippani, another school-

[1] Bentivoglio means: "I love you."

mate of ours, who in verses composed by her, answered in the name of our dear Lord, assuring us of His love and protection. We were so moved at the unexpected spectacle that we could not refrain from shedding tears. We two, together with our sisters Agatha, Alphonsa and Mathilda, had thrown ourselves on our knees around the good Mother Superior, but could find no words to express our gratitude. But when they brought two crowns of white roses to place on our heads, we emphatically protested, saying it was not befitting that we should accept such marks of honor. Crowns of thorns would be better suited. A copy of the verses were then given us, which we preserved ever after, as a precious souvenir.

Later on, we received a number of visits. There was the celebrated astronomer, the Rev. Father Secchi, S. J., who had been a great friend of our family. There were several Roman ladies who had been our school-mates in our childhood. We also received a visit from Cardinal Edward Borromeo, who had been our guardian since the death of our beloved mother. He gave permission to our sister Mathilda to accompany us some distance on the road, on condition, however, that one of our brothers should accompany her so as to prevent her from returning to Rome alone. When he left he presented us with a picture of our Lady of Seven Sorrows and then blessed us with all his heart. We felt sore at bidding him good bye, as he had always been so kind and fatherly to us. We finally had a visit from the Most Rev. Father Saturnino of Moggiona, Procurator General of the Franciscan Order.

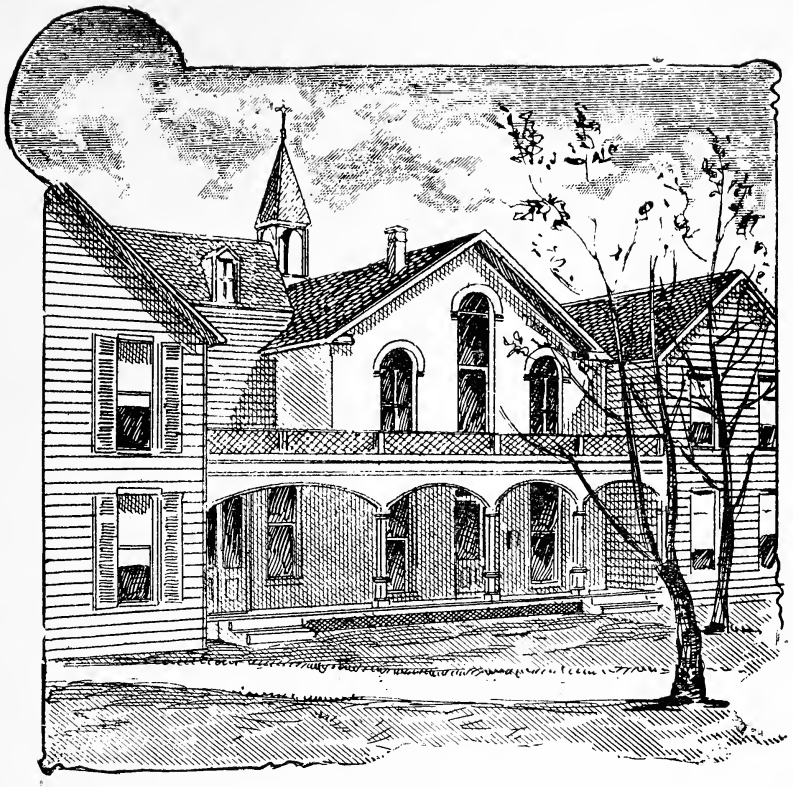
That evening we went to confession for the last time in Rome. It was a happy coincidence that, in the same Church of the Trinità, where we had made our first confession as children, we should also make our last upon leaving the city.

On Saturday, August 14th, we rose at five. Mass was

celebrated at six by Father Saturnino at the altar of the Mater Admirabilis. We five again received Holy Communion in a body. One of our brothers, Cornelio by name, who was to accompany Mathilda, also assisted. All these little circumstances filled us with great spiritual joy and consolation.

At last, the moment for our departure arrived. For the last time, we kissed and embraced our sisters Agatha and Alphonsa, and took leave of the good Mothers of the Trinità. We parted with sadness in our hearts; for we left behind us persons who were endeared to us both by the ties of nature and friendship, and whom, in all probability, we should never behold again on this earth.

Father Saturnino accompanied us to the central station where we took the train for Assisi.



FIRST HOUSE OF THE POOR CLARES AT CLEVELAND, OHIO.
FROM AUGUST 10, 1877, TO FEBRUARY 26, 1878.

[*From a Sketch.*]

II.

Upon the Journey.

Visiting Assisi.

We left Rome at 8:50 a. m. and arrived at Assisi at 1 p. m. Our first visit was to the Sanctuary of our Lady of the Angels, which is close to the station. This is the ancient little chapel where our Blessed Father S. Francis obtained from our Divine Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the inestimable treasure of the great indulgence, commonly called the Indulgence of Portiuncula. Having satisfied our devotion in this humble sanctuary, we lovingly visited every spot, which had been made memorable by the presence of our Seraphic Patriarch. We saw the well, where he used to draw water. We saw the grotto, where the Blessed Father was at prayer, when the Angels came to tell him, that Jesus and Mary were awaiting him in the church. We saw the place where, he threw himself into a bush of thorns, in order to overcome a violent temptation, when suddenly the thorns disappeared, and the bush was covered with beautiful roses. Each leaf is marked with a dark stain as of blood. We took with us a number of these leaves, as a memento. The season for the roses had already passed.

At the Monastery of Santa Chiara.

We then mounted the public conveyance, or omnibus, and drove up to the city of Assisi, which is quite a distance

from the railway station. We got off at the hotel, where we dined and took some rest, which we much needed.

Soon after, we received a visit from the Bishop of Assisi who was a great friend of our guardian, Cardinal Borromeo. We conversed for a time upon different topics, till it was time to go to the Monastery of Santa Chiara, whither the Bishop was going to take us, and where we were to stay over night. We were sorry that our sister Mathilda could not accompany us, as the Monastery had Papal enclosure. The Angelus was just ringing, when we entered the Monastery. Mother Chiara Colomba Angeli, Abbess of the Monastery, who had come to the entrance to receive us, playfully remarked that this was a good omen. Two little cells were placed at our disposal, to which the Abbess herself kindly conducted us.

Here, then, we found ourselves in the celebrated Monastery of Santa Chiara, which is now the mother-house of the whole Order of S. Clare. Here rests the body of our glorious Mother S. Clare, the Institutor and first Abbess of the Order; and here governs her living representative, the Mother Abbess of the Monastery, who is her direct successor in that office. And, indeed, the present Mother Abbess was a worthy representative of S. Clare. She was a true model of holiness, beloved by her Religious, and venerated by Bishops and Cardinals, by everyone, in fact, who had the happiness to come in contact with her.[1]

There was another saintly Nun, who died but recently in that Monastery, February 2nd, 1876. Her name was Maria Cherubina Saracinella. The memory of her holy life and eminent virtues was still fresh in the minds of the Sisters. She was especially remarkable for the wonderful supernatural favors, which God deigned to confer upon her. Yet however deeply she might be rapt into extacy, being

[1] This holy Abbess died, February 15th, 1893, after having governed the community during the space of thirty-seven years, in a most exemplary manner. She passed through some very troublesome and trying times

unconscious of everything around her, she would, at the mere bidding of her Superior, rise at once, and take part in the ordinary occupations of the community.[1]

Next morning we received Holy Communion in a side-chapel at a narrow grating, opening into the sanctuary of the High Altar of the Church. After thanksgiving, Mother Abbess came to show us the Relics preserved in the Nuns' chapel.

Here we saw the celebrated crucifix before which S. Francis used to pray at San Damiano, and from which proceeded that mysterious voice, which told him to go and repair God's church. It is preserved within a case and covered with a curtain. Mother Abbess opened the case and raised the curtain, so that we could have a good view of it. It was at the foot of this crucifix, that the body of S. Clare had reposed upon an altar, from 1850 to 1872, previous to its final reposition in the subterranean vault of the church.

There we also saw the silver case containing the plaster, or salve, prepared by S. Clare to alleviate the pain S. Francis endured in his side-wound. We reverently took it into our hands and devoutly kissed it. A most delicious fragrance proceeds from it which gave us great consolation. We could hardly lay it aside again. How we wished to be allowed to keep it, and take it with us to America!

Amongst the Relics, that, which impressed us most, was the hair-shirt worn by S. Clare. It is so rough that you can hardly touch it without pricking your fingers. No wonder that the poor Sister, who had asked S. Clare to lend it to her, brought it back in a few days, as she could not bear it, in spite of her love of penance.

Upon leaving, we had to re-pass through the Nuns' choir. This was formerly the ancient little church of S. George. The brick walls, the stone-flagged floor, and most of the seats and benches were just as they were six centuries

[1] The process for her beatification has already been introduced.

ago. This is the place where the bodies of S. Francis and S. Clare had reposed previous to their removal to the new Shrines erected in their honor.

How many holy men and women had hallowed this place by their presence! How many blessings and favors had here been obtained, how many miracles wrought! And how it is sanctified still by the silent tears and supplications of so many holy Religious! How holy was this place! How unworthy were we even to enter into its sacred precincts! Such were our thoughts at the time.

After breakfast we descended with Mother Abbess into the crypt. It is difficult to describe our feelings on that occasion. Here we stood, face to face with the sacred remains of our holy Mother S. Clare. Long and silently we gazed upon her body with deep emotions of love, mingled with awe and reverence. Here we realized more than ever our littleness and unworthiness. Still, at the same time, we were also animated with great confidence in the love and power of our blessed Mother. We cast ourselves upon our knees, and prayed with all the ardor of which we were capable, that she would obtain for us the grace to walk in her footsteps and be numbered among her genuine daughters. We turned to the saintly Abbess and begged of her to pray for us to our dear Mother, that we might obtain our request. She did so. After a while, she rose from her knees, and said to us: "Have courage, dear Sisters! I feel confident your prayers will be answered." She then took our mantles and laid them upon the crystal shrine, containing the sacred remains, and then placed them upon our heads. At that moment a holy tremor ran through our bodies, and we rose from our knees with renewed fervor and courage.

Mother Abbess then pointed out to us the various ornaments, wrought in gold and silver, and studded with jewelry, given by the piety of the faithful as grateful votive offerings.

How great was our joy when, passing in front of the

large grating which looks into the church, we saw, on the other side, our little sister Mathilda and our brother Cornelio, together with Father Paolino and Mother Ignatius, who had come to venerate the holy shrine. We exchanged a few words, and then turned to depart. We had brought with us a beautiful bouquet of fresh flowers, which we begged the Mother Abbess to place upon the tomb in our name. We took another good view, silently imploring once more the blessing of our holy Mother S. Clare. We could hardly tear ourselves away. But time pressed.

We bade a loving farewell to the Sisters who were sorry to see us depart so soon. Mother Abbess presented us with a large relic of S. Clare, which we have brought with us to America, and which we expose, on her feast-day, for the public veneration of the faithful. We cast ourselves at the feet of Mother Abbess and besought her to give us her blessing as successor of S. Clare. Though she shrank from the honors exhibited by us, stlll she lovingly complied with our request.

San Damiano and the Basilica of S. Francis.

From Santa Chiara we turned our steps to San Damiano, the cradle of our Order and the actual scene of our holy Mother's life and death. With deep devotion, we visited the choir, refectory and dormitory, sanctified by S. Clare and her holy companions. Everything is still as it used to be in her day, and her spirit seems to linger upon the whole place. Whatever you behold, forcibly puts you in mind of her wonderful love of poverty and austerity.

Re-entering the city, we paid a visit to the Church of the Franciscans, where we saw the prison into which S. Francis had been cast by his father.

Then we hastened our steps toward the triple Basilica of the holy Patriarch, where we arrived just in time for Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, given by the Bishop. After service, the Bishop came to join us, and, together, we descended into the subterranean church, to pray at the tomb of our Seraphic Father S. Francis, and to implore his blessing and assistance to enable us to transplant his spirit into a new country.

The Bishop then conducted us to the chapel of the Relics. It is impossible to enumerate all we saw. What interested us most, was the Blessing written by S. Francis for Brother Leo. We begged to be blessed with it for a happy journey. Upon leaving, one of the Fathers gave us some little souvenirs of the place which we gladly accepted to take with us to America.

Thus ended our visits in Assisi. The time at our disposal was too short to visit everything of Franciscan interest. There is scarcely a street in the whole city where you do not find some painting, or inscription, or other monument, commemorating some fact from the life of the Saint of Assisi.

The Holy Patriarch, before dying, had invoked upon the city a solemn blessing. The effects of that blessing are still visible at the present day. The sweet spirit of our gentle Saint of Assisi seems to have left an indelible mark upon the entire city. Everywhere it breathes forth an atmosphere of peace and serenity. Its inhabitants have a cheerful and contented appearance. The very air you inhale is calm and soothing, scented with the sweet odors, that arise from the fruitful vegetation of the fertile valley below.

That evening the Bishop paid us a fare-well visit in the hotel where we stayed over night. We shall never forget his fatherly kindness.

FROM ASSISI TO NICE.

We left Assisi August 16th. We had to leave early, and were, on that account, debarred from hearing Mass. It was the first sacrifice we made on our journey. The train started a few minutes before six. At 2:30 p. m. we arrived at Florence where we stayed over night.

Next morning we heard Mass at the celebrated church of the Dominican Fathers, called Santa Maria Novella. At 7:50, our train left for Bologna, where we arrived at noon. Here we were called upon to suffer a little disappointment. We were at Bologna, the home of our beloved parents, and our own ancestral place. Several of our brothers, and other relatives, were in the city at the time. Yet though so close to them, we saw none of them. They, no doubt, must have felt the disappointment just as much as we did, when afterwards they learned we had been so near without letting them know.

Here our itinerary was somewhat altered by Mr. Francesco Politi, a friend of our family, who had joined us at Assisi. He asked us whether we should like to call at Portogruaro, the birth-place of our Most Rev. Fr. General. We naturally said, yes. So, at 12:40, we took the train, as we thought, for Portogruaro. But what was our surprise when, after a few hours' ride, we halted at Padua, changed train, and suddenly found ourselves at the famous city of Venice! It had been for the purpose of giving us a treat, and such it was indeed. How pleasant to be seated in a gondola and glide along swiftly on the blue waters, in and out the different canals, past gorgeous temples, magnificent palaces, picturesque old-fashioned dwelling houses, and imposing monuments of every form and description! The sight is truly enchanting for one who has never witnessed it before.

But our stay was short. The same evening, we re-

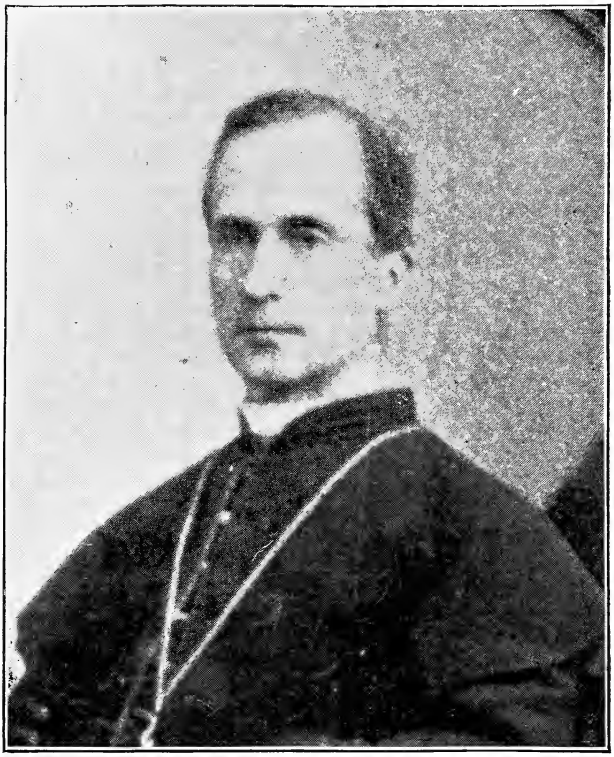
turned to Padua, and, early next morning, we went to the world-famed Basilica of S. Anthony, the Wonderworker of the world. We assisted at Mass, and received Holy Communion. Afterwards, we went to pray at the tomb of S. Anthony, earnestly craving his powerful protection. A certain Father Ignatius then took us to the Chapel of Relics where, amongst other treasures, we venerated the blessed tongue of the Saint, by which he had praised God so much, and converted so many poor souls from sin and heresy.

Here we said good bye to our dear little sister Mathilda and our beloved brother Cornelio, leaving them under the protection of the great Saint. The parting was painful to our weak human nature. "God's will be done!" was the motto that gave us strength and consolation.

A little later, we took train for Milan. Having some time to spare, we visited the famous Dome, and descended into the crypt where the body of S. Charles Barromeo lies buried. We then continued our journey and arrived, late at night, in Genoa. Next day, we took train for Nice which we reached at 12 o'clock noon.

FROM NICE TO MARSEILLES.

Our Most Rev. Father General, Father Bernardine, was just then holding his canonical visitation at Nice. Our first visit was to him to pay him our humble respects. After having given us a paternal welcome, he took us to a convent of Ursuline Nuns, who gave us a most cordial reception. Here we remained several days. Father General called each day for a little while. The day of parting at last arrived. It was August 23d. Father General arrived early in the morning. We went to confession, after which Father General imparted to us the General Absolution, and then



RIGHT REV. JAMES O'CONNOR,
BISHOP OF OMAHA, NEB., 1885—1890.

(*From a Photo taken in 1879.*)

commenced Mass. Just before receiving Holy Communion, we renewed our vows in the hands of the Minister General, according to the Rule of the Second Order of S. Francis. That was a solemn moment, leaving a lasting impression upon us.

After thanksgiving, the General entered the enclosure of the Nuns, and took breakfast with us. But the thought of having to part so soon from the last kind friend, who linked us to our Order in Italy, took away what little relish we had for food. After breakfast, we took a walk in the beautiful convent grounds. There was a magnificent grové of trees, in the midst of which stood a statue of our Lady of La Salette. Here Father General stopped and handed us our formal letters of obedience, which directed us, in virtue of holy obedience, to establish the order in America, appointing Sister Maddalena, Abbess, and Sister Costanza, Vicaress and Mistress of Novices. We received these documents on our knees and kissed them, in token of love and submission. We cannot recall all the kind words with which Father General endeavored to encourage and advise us. Above all things, he told us, never to despair or lose confidence in the goodness and mercy of our kind heavenly Father, into Whose safe keeping he had placed us. We accompanied him to the door of the enclosure, where, on our knees, we once more asked for his blessing. A few more consoling words; then the door of the enclosure opened to allow him to depart, and we were left alone.

Next day, August 24th, we were on our way to Marseilles, where we were received with much love and affection by our dear Sisters of the Monastery of S. Clare. Here we were obliged to stay quite a while, until the steamer, which was to take us to our new home, would be ready to set sail. But the time was well employed. The saintly Mother Abbess Mother Teresa Tavera of the Sacred Heart, gave us a good deal of solid instruction and information, which after-

wards, in the establishment of the Order, proved to be very profitable.

Father Paolino and Mother Ignatius came to visit us several times, and asked us to stay with them in the city. But we did not like to give offence by leaving the Monastery and going to live elsewhere, till at length, on the 11th day of September, we yielded to the request of Mother Ignatius, and after having taken an affectionate farewell of the good Mother Abbess and Sisters, we went, with Mother Ignatius, to the convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Here we met Mother Pauline Perdraux, who was a Novice at the Trinità de' Monti, Rome, when we were there as children to be educated. It was she who had painted the famous picture of the Mater Admirabilis for which Costanza had often posed as a model. In the company of this good Mother Perdraux and Mother Ignatius, we went to another convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart, called St. Joseph's, situated outside the city in the country. This place had formerly been a Monaster of Poor Clares, but was suppressed in 1800. The Religious, then living, were allowed to remain, yet not permitted to receive any more Novices. When, in the due course of time, only a few old Nuns were left, the place was handed over to the Society of the Sacred Heart.

We enjoyed our stay very much. We here met quite a number of our old school-mates and Teachers, and we took much pleasure in the recollection of scenes and events of by-gone days. Everyone, in fact, endeavored to make things as pleasant as possible. But at length, we were advised that the steamer was ready for our reception. So we said good bye all round, returned to the city, and got ready to embark.

III.

On Board the Castalia.

FROM MARSEILLES TO ALMERIA.

The steamer Castalia, which was to take us to our destination, only carried merchandise, but would also accommodate an occasional passenger. We left the harbor at seven o'clock in the evening. We were looking out for the statue of our Lady de la Guarde, but could not see it, on account of the fog. So we turned towards the direction in which we believed it to be, and invoked our Lady's blessing for a happy voyage. We enjoyed the sea air very much, and stayed on deck till tea-time. A nice comfortable cabin had been placed at our disposal through the kindness of the Captain.

We rose very early next morning, and went on deck to say our office and make our meditation. Next to being before our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, we cannot imagine anything better calculated to impress one with the nearness of God, than being on the broad expanse of the ocean. The clear blue sky, rising above, like an immense vault, reflected in the deep blue waters below, which extend as far as the eye can reach, till they touch the very heavens: all this is an image, however faint, of the immensity of God. And as you look out into the immensity above and around you, a silent awe steals upon your soul. Your soul loses itself in the infinitude of God. A sweet calm fills your soul. Your soul is at rest, at rest with God. God is near.

But we were, all on a sudden, rudely disturbed out of

our pious meditations by the sailors who appeared with bucket and broom, and we had to beat a hasty retreat.

The first day and night all went well. But the next day, the sea began to demand its tribute. Poor Mother Maddalena was the first to fall a victim to the dread sea-sickness. Her companions were laughing at her. But she said: "Wait, until your own turn comes." And they did not have to wait long.

Early in the morning of the 17th of September, we stopped at Denia in Spain for cargo, and again at Cape San Antonio, where we took coal.

Sunday, September 19th, we came to Cuaveas, where the Captain kindly stopped for the purpose of allowing us to land and go to Mass. We arrived at the Cathedral, where Solemn High Mass was just commencing. But we are afraid our devotion was rather poor. Certain things appeared to us so strange and novel that we could hardly refrain from laughing. Instead of a small sanctuary bell, we saw a big wheel full of little bells of every imaginable sound. You can easily conceive what the result must have been, when this wheel was suddenly set in motion at a great rate. Besides this, all the attendants and servers in the sanctuary were men with beards and mustaches. At the end of the Mass, they formed into procession. The celebrant carried the Blessed Sacrament. Again the big wheel of bells started and continued the whole time. Just then the purser of our steamer came to tell us it was time to return on board. We were almost glad to have a good excuse to get away.

AT ALMERIA.

September 20th, we landed at Almeria, where we were delayed several days. Our first visit was to the Cathedral. Upon entering it, our attention was attracted by a mag-

nificent large oil painting of the glorious Martyr S. Lawrence. We stood to have a good view of it. How it reminded us of our dear San Lorenzo in Rome! We then went to pray before our Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. As we were returning by the middle aisle, we were met by one of the Canons of the Cathedral, Don Eusebio Y Sanchez by name. He kindly showed us over the place. In the afternoon, he accompanied us to the Poor Clares of the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception. About five or six old Nuns were left. They inhabited a few small rooms at the lower end of the church. The Monastery and cloister had been confiscated by government.

In the evening, we returned to the steamer, where we stayed over night. Next morning, we landed early. Don Eusebio was waiting for us. Together we drove to the Sisters of Charity. Don Eusebio and Father Paolino celebrated Mass. After thanksgiving, we visited the whole establishment, which was very large. Some of the officers of the steamer accompanied us. We were much impressed with the order, neatness and cleanliness of everything. All the inmates appeared so happy and contented. The Nuns, at once so cheerful and obliging, were as much pleased with our visit, as we were with the entire surroundings.

The night was again spent on the steamer. Next day, we went for another visit in the city. Don Eusebio said Mass for us at one of the side-altars of the Cathedral, at which we received Holy Communion. Afterwards Don Eusebio introduced to us three young ecclesiastics who had just returned from Rome, where they had been educated for the priesthood. One of them had been decorated by the Pope with the title of Monsignore. They were learned and earnest young priests, and much was expected of them; for, at that time, Religion was at a low ebb in Spain.

We returned to the steamer in time for dinner. In the afternoon, Don Eusebio with his three friends paid us a visit

on board the steamer. He had brought with him for a present a small orange-tree, planted in a large pot. But we are sorry to say, it did not survive the journey. He gave us also a beautiful picture of S. Anthony, a copy of the famous Vision painted by Murillo. He had written his name on the back of it as a memento. Our friends could not stay long. So, after giving us a hearty farewell, they departed in their little boat. Very soon after, we also started. The sea was calm and delightful. A slight refreshing breeze was blowing, which threw the waters into a series of beautiful little ripples, that seemed to be chasing one another.

MALAGA AND GIBRALTAR.

Next day at noon, we arrived at Malaga. It was September 23d. Here the steamer took a large cargo of almonds and dried raisins.

We stayed aboard, the others landed. Towards evening, Mother Ignatius came to offer us the hospitality of the Sisters of the Assumption, who desired us to stay with them, until the steamer would depart again. We availed ourselves of their kind offer, and went ashore. The Sisters happened to be in Retreat. Still, the Mother Superior was very kind and attentive to us. She appointed two Sisters to accompany us out into the city. We saw the Cathedral, also another large Monastery of Poor Clares, likewise confiscated by government, and cut up into small sections to serve as stores and private dwelling houses.

Next day, we stayed indoors. We wrote a number of letters to our friends at home. Afterwards we took a walk through the convent garden. There we saw bananas, oranges, lemons, and a variety of beautiful flowers. In the evening, about seven, Mother Superior conducted us to the

steamer, as it was to leave during the night. We had a great fright; for the sea was very rough, and we had great difculty in getting aboard. Yet everything came off without any mishap, thanks, no doubt, to the good prayers that were being offered up by our numerous friends.

We left Malaga, September 26th, about 3 a. m., and got to Gibraltar about 8, the same morning. We did not quit the steamer that day. We looked at the scenery, Gibraltar with its massive fortifications on one side, and the shores of the African continent, on the other. We lay in the Straights of Gibraltar, the door, that opens out into the mighty Atlantic. We also amused ourselves watching the sailors haul on board the sheep which—poor things!—were destined to be slaughtered to serve us as food on the journey.

ON THE ATLANTIC.

We left Gibraltar, September 27th, and entered upon the Atlantic Ocean. We noticed the change very soon. The color of the water lost its sky blue appearance and assumed a dark green tint. Our steamer now seemed to go in leaps and bounds, as it rose and fell on the billows of the waves.

But in other respects, too, there is a vast difference between the narrow cramped Mediterranean and the broad open Atlantic. If the former already impressed us deeply with the thought of God's immensity, the latter did so still more. Here everything is on a grander and more majestic scale. Yes, indeed, how little and how insignificant did we not appear in the face of this immensity! And in the deep silent recesses of our awe-stricken hearts, we humbly adored the great Creator, invisible to mortal eye, yet visible and tangible in His works; and we thanked and blessed Him

most sincerely for His goodness and mercy towards all His creatures.

We were on deck as much as possible in order to contemplate nature and study the lessons it taught.

How impressive to watch the early morn, when on the far horizon the sun suddenly emerges from the waves in all its new-born splendor, and when the silvery waves, burnished by its first rays, seem to roll onward as if to offer their morning salutation, to the risen lord of day! And how pathetic the scene of the setting sun, when, weary and tired, as it were, the sun sinks into its grave, while the waves, dyed in purple red, seem to mourn over its departure! Then comes the night, when all is still and dark as death. And though the moon and the stars may appear, yet their fitful light only serves to enhance the awfulness of the scene, conjuring up, as it were, weird phantoms from the silence of the deep; and we longed to behold again the genial, reassuring light of day.

The weather remained nice and calm the whole time. We hardly knew what we should have done, if a storm had overtaken us. We felt so timid. But our Lord seemed to have tempered the winds and the waves in our regard. How kind He was to us! The Captain told us, he never before had experienced such a smooth passage; and he did not know to what kind genius he owed this exceptional favor, as he added in his good-humored way. He was not a Catholic. Yet no one could have been as kind and gentle to us as he was.

ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK.

It was October 10th, when, towards evening, a little bird entered by our sitting room window. How rejoiced we were to see the little creature, giving us, as it were, the

THE HON. JOHN A. CREIGHTON, OF OMAHA, NEB.
Count of the Holy Roman Empire,
Founder of the Monastery of S. Clare, Omaha, Neb.

[*From a Photo.*]

MRS. J. A. CREIGHTON, OF OMAHA, NEB.
Died September 30, 1888.

[*From a Photo taken in 1884.*]

first welcome to our new home. During the night, the steamer suddenly stopped. We were alarmed, thinking something had gone wrong. But the Captain himself assured us that there was no need to be afraid. They had stopped merely to sound the depth of the ocean which, at that spot, was just 47 feet. He showed us the sand that had come up with the instrument.

Next morning, we were told that the pilot boat was coming to meet us. Finally, on the 12th of October, early in the morning, it was announced that land was in sight. In a few minutes, everyone was on deck. All the ill effects of the long sea-trip disappeared in an instant. What a happiness to see land again ! We were experiencing a little of the joy and consolation Columbus and his companions must have felt, when, after a long and adventurous voyage, they caught the first glimpse of the New World.

We landed in New York, October 12th, about 1 p. m. All, except ourselves, left the steamer at once. About 5 o'clock, Mother Ignatius returned and took us in a carriage to 143 West 31st Street, to the convent of Grey Sisters, who have their mother-house in Gemona, Italy. Rev. Fr. Eugenius, Pastor of the Church of S. Francis of Assisi, himself a Franciscan, presented us to the Sisters. Mother Ignatius went to the Franciscan Sisters at Spring Street, and Father Paolino to the Franciscan Fathers at Sullivan Street.

IV.

A Chapter of Disappointments.

FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT.

October 13th, we felt very lonely. We were left entirely to ourselves. No one came near us. We became alarmed, and begged of Mother Superior to get us someone who could conduct us to Father Paolino so that we might know what was to be done. She sent for the daughter of the organist of S. Francis' Church, who kindly took us to Sullivan Street. Father Paolino excused himself for not coming to say Mass at S. Francis, as it was too far to walk there in his religious habit, and as he did not care to put on the secular Iress. But now came the first serious disappointment.

When we broached the object of our visit, he told us he had definitely made up his mind not to continue his journew with Mother Ignatius, but remain in New York, until he would hear from Fr. General. He had good solid reasons for what he was doing. If we wished to continue our journey to Belle Prairie, we might do so. He would not oppose us. But if we took his advise, we should do as he was doing. What were we to do? We knew how disappointed poor Mother Ignatius would be if now, at the last moment, we refused to accompany her. Yet, if, under the present circumstances we went with her, we would, more or less, be doing our own will. Hence we considered it more prudent and more in accordance with God's will to take F. Paolino's advise.

Next day, Mother Ignatius called on us at 31 Street to arrange about continuing our journey to Belle Prairie. Here was a difficult task before us. We knew we should grieve

the poor lady who had been so good and kind to us. But we saw no other way out of the dilemma. Hence we broke the news to her as gently as we could. We told her that certain obstacles had arisen, which compelled us to remain for the present where we were until further orders from Rome. Otherwise we should have only been too delighted to accompany her to Belle Prairie. We begged of her not to bear us any ill will, as it was not our fault. Poor Mother Ignatius felt the refusal very much. Yet having no binding claim upon us, she resigned herself to the inevitable, and departed from us with sorrow and grief in her heart.

How strange are God's ways! Whatever may have been Mother Ignatius' personal intentions, it certainly must be said to her lasting credit, that she was instrumental in bringing us to this country. God made use of her for His own wise ends, without granting her the fulfilment of her own desires. [1]

MORE TRIALS.

Days went by, and no news of any kind reached us. One day, when we were feeling unusually sorrowful and lonely, we set out to call upon the Most Rev. Fr. I. T. Hecker, Founder of the Paulists, whom we had met some time before, and whose kind words had given us great comfort. On our way a poor old Irish lady approached us with many courtesies, and gave us an offering of five cents, which we gratefully accepted, expressing our thanks as best we could. It was, no doubt, the widow's mite, for which God will have rewarded her, as though she had given thousands. When we reached the House of the Paulist Fathers, we found to our sorrow that Fr. Hecker was ill, and hence we had to depart without seeing him.

[1] Mother Mary Ignatius Hayes died some years ago in a convent of Tertiary Sisters of S. Francis in Rome Italy.

But our trials were only beginning. When we returned to 31st Street, we were told, with all politeness, by one of the Franciscan Fathers, that it was not right for us to burden the Sisters any longer. They had to work hard, and we were doing nothing. What answer could we make? In silent grief, we took our belongings, and walked away, not knowing whither to turn. Here we were in a strange land, in a strange city, without friends, without means. The five cents, which had been given us as an alms, constituted all the wealth of which we could boast. Fr. Paolino was the only one we knew. Yet he, too, was a stranger, all alone, and without means.

We first called upon the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at 17th Street. But they did not offer us hospitality, and we had no heart to ask for it.

There was no one left but Fr. Paolino, though we did not know how he would help us. To him, therefore, we went, and told him our troubles. He represented our case to Rev. Father James, Pastor of S. Anthony's Church, who had pity on us, and sent us to the Franciscan Sisters at Spring Street. These Sisters were very poor, yet they received us with great charity.

Shortly afterwards, Mother Angela, Superior General of the Grey Sisters, came from Gemona, Italy, to hold the Visitation of the Order in America. She invited us to accompany her to Peekskill, the Novitiate House, an immense institution, beautifully situated on the banks of the Hudson, not far from New York. Here we remained till November 19th. We there made the acquaintance of Dr. E. McGlynn, to whom, afterwards, we used to go to confession, whenever we had an oppurtunity, as he spoke Italian.

As long as Mother Angela remained in the country, we were the guests of the Grey Sisters. We were thus again installed at 31st. Street. But we also went to stay occasionally at Spring Street, where everyone was so kind to us.

During this time, we took lessons in English, so that, after a while, we managed to carry on a conversation upon ordinary subjects.

Now and again, we had our little trials, having, at times, even to go without our meals. Yet God was very good to us, never permitting us to suffer any real want. Once a young Irishman gave us an alms without being asked. After a while, we made the acquaintance of a very charitable lady, who often invited us to her house, and assisted us in many ways.

REFUSALS OF CARDINAL McCLOSKY AND BISHOP PURCELL.

The chief trial, we had to endure, all along, was the state of uncertainty in which we were left. Months upon months passed, and no news arrived from Rome. Were we going to be abandoned even by our own superiors ?

At length, in the month of June, 1876, a letter came from our Father General. He told us, first to pray fervently, then to go to Cardinal McClosky, Archbishop of New York,[1] who spoke Italian, and beg of him, on our knees, to give us, for the love of God, a place in his diocese. Should he refuse to accept us, we were to make an application to the Archbishop of Cincinnati, which was looked upon as the Rome of the United States; and upon his refusal, we were to approach the Archbishop of Philadelphia.

We carried out our instructions to the very letter. Hence we called, first of all, upon the Archbishop of New York. Here we met with the first refusal. The Cardinal told us, kindly yet firmly, that he could not admit us into his diocese, as he did not consider our Institute to be in keeping with the spirit of the age, and still less in accordance with the trend of the mind of the American people.

(1) His Eminence, John Cardinal McClosky, was the fourth Bishop, and Second Archbishop, of New York, being appointed to that See May 6, 1864; died, October 10, 1885.

He even gave us a severe rebuke for having already loitered about so long without making ourselves useful.

Like spoiled children, who have just received a nice scolding, we went to our good Fr. Hecker for a little consolation, and from him to Dr. McGlynn, who also comforted us, and promised to write on our behalf to the most Rev. John Baptist Purcell, D. D., Archbishop of Cincinnati.[1] But when, after a time, we returned to him for an answer, we found that he also had given us a refusal.

June 13th, Mother Angela left New York to return to Italy. After her departure, we went to live for a while at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, at Manhattenville.

July 25th, we were visited by our niece, Miss Angelina Middleton,[2] who had come from Rome to see the Exposition in Philadelphia. Together with her, and a few other friends, we went to the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at Eden Hall, Pa.

ACCEPTED BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA.

As Eden Hall was not far from Philadelphia, we at length, determined to present ourselves, according to instructions, before the Most Rev. James F. Wood, D. D., Archbishop of Philadelphia.[3] Hence, August 10th, we went to Philadelphia, accompanied by Mother M. Dunne, and Mother L. C. Bouvier, both of the Society of the Sacred Heart, to call upon the Archbishop, who showed himself very kind and paternal. In looking over the letter of our Most Rev. Fr. General, directing us to call last upon the Archbishop of Philadelphia, he remarked with a

(1) Second Bishop of Cincinnati, consecrated October 13, 1833, made Archbishop July 19, 1850; died Juty 4, 1883.

(2) Paola Bentivoglio, the second child of the family, married Col. Arthur Middleton, of Charleston, South Carolina, Upon the death of her husband in 1852, she went to live with her two children in Rome.

(3) The Fifth Bishop of Philadelphia, was consecrated Coadjutor Bishop April 26, 1857, appointed Bishop of Philadelphia January 5, 1860, created Archbishop June 17, 1875; died June 20, 1883.

smile: "So you have kept me for the last;" and regarding us with paternal solicitude, he added: "No one has ever yet died of starvation in my diocese, neither shall you." He there and then kindly handed us the key of one of his own houses, situated at No. 3627, Walnut Street, West Philadelphia.

We now believed all our troubles to be at an end. We heartily thanked the good Bishop, and departed with great joy in our hearts.

Together with Mother M. Dunne and Mother Bouvier, we inspected the House in Walnut Street, and were very much pleased with it. It was not exactly what a monastery was expected to be; but it would do very well for a beginning.

The Ladies of the Sacred Heart also had a Home in Walnut Street. This was very agreeable to us, as we should thus be quite close to our friends. And they were indeed true friends. Mother Bouvier told us that, when she first saw us at Eden Hall, she at once conceived a great affection for us. She had a sister, Mrs. F. A. Drexel, who was very kind to the poor. From her we obtained all things needful for our new establishment.

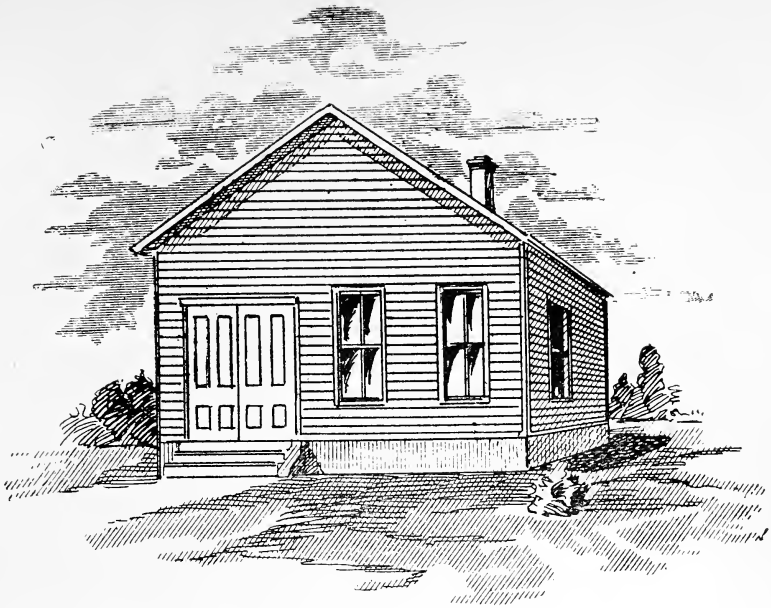
We now wrote to our Father General in Rome, telling him of the kind reception given us by the Archbishop, and asking him to obtain for us due authorization to open a House of the Order in Philadelphia. Then we returned to New York, where we stayed with our old friends, the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, at Manhattanville. We also called upon Fr. Paolino, the partner in our tribulations, to tell him of our success in Philadelphia. (Father Paolino was shortly afterwards recalled to Rome by Fr. General.)

September 23d we got a letter from Fr. General, granting our request. He also sent us a generous alms to enable us to meet some of our present expenses. We likewise re-

ceived testimonial letters from Cardinal Franchi, Prefect of the Propaganda to prove the legitimacy of our case.

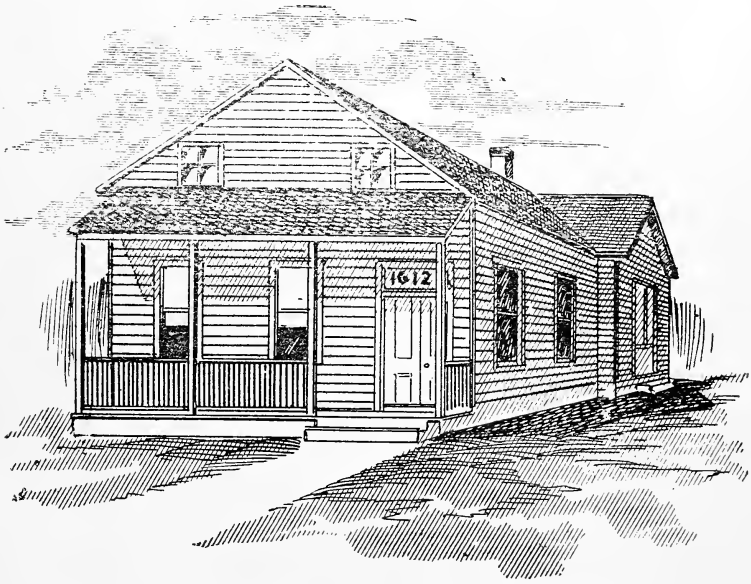
October 2d., we said good bye to the kind Ladies at Manhattenville, thanking them most sincerely for their charity towards two poor daughters of S. Francis. That night we stayed at the Franciscan Sisters of 31st Street. Early next morning, we assisted at Mass, received Holy Communion, and after an affectionate farewell to the Sisters, we got ready to depart. We left at 7 a. m., and at 11 o'clock we arrived at Torresdale, where we were met by Mother Bouvier who took us to Eden Hall. October 6th., Mother Bouvier accompanied us to Philadelphia. Here we stayed with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, until our new home would be ready.

October 7th., everything was in readiness. But before taking possession of our new home, we wished to obtain the Bishop's blessing. Yet what was our surprise when, upon approaching the episcopal residence, we saw coming from it Cardinal McClosky, accompanied by a number of priests. A strange foreboding of evil, at once took possession of us. But we tried to hide our feelings, as much as possible, under a cheerful exterior. The Archbishop was very kind, though somewhat brusque, and heartily gave us his blessing. Somewhat re-assured, we drove to No. 3627, Walnut Street. Several ladies were waiting to receive us in the name of Mrs. Drexel, through whose generosity the house had been neatly furnished, and everything made ready for our reception. One of the rooms had been transformed into a little chapel by the good Ladies of the Sacred Heart. Even the school children had brought their offerings to adorn the little chapel. A beautiful chalice was given us by Mr. Michael Bouvier, brother of Mother Bouvier. The young ladies, having welcomed us to our new home departed. Yet one of them remained, offering her services to assist us in our do-



First House of the Poor Clares at Omaha, Neb.
From September 27, to November 5, 1878.

[*From a Sketch.*]



Second House of the Poor Clares at Omaha, Neb.,
From November 5, t June 23d.

[*From a Sketch.*]

mestic work. She also manifested a desire of joining the Order.

October 19th., Miss Elizabeth Baily, whom we knew in New York, came to join us as a postulant. We gave her the name of Sister Elizabeth.

Everything was going on well. In the morning, we used to go to Mass at the Church of S. James, where Father O'Neill was Pastor. Then we returned home for our daily occupation. We had hired a sewing machine, and were taking in some sewing. One of our neighbors, a good Irish lady, was especially kind to us. Her children went errands for us, and they saved us many a trip. But our happiness was too great to last long. Very soon our troubles were to begin afresh.

HOMELESS AGAIN.

It was October 27th., when we received a summons from the Archbishop to call upon him. We, at once, felt that fresh trials were awaiting us, and we were not mistaken. We found the Bishop in consultation with his counsellors. He told us, he was very sorry to have to inform us, that he could not retain us in his diocese. He had no other reason to give except the one advanced by Cardinal McClosky, that he did not believe our Order to be suitable to this country. Yet, he kindly added, we might stay at his house in Walnut Street, until we should have decided what to do. God only knows what we felt at that moment. We humbly bowed our heads in submission to the decrees of Divine Providence, made known to us by the Archbishop, and inwardly repeated again and again: "Thy will be done, O God! Thy will be done!

Turning the corner of 18th Street, we passed the Cathedral, which we had not visited before. We entered to pour out our hearts before our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,

humbly entreating Him for light and strength. Looking around us we saw a beautiful painting of our Seraphic Patriarch S. Francis. Going on our knees, we fervently invoked our Blessed Father to aid us by his powerful intercession in heaven. Thus comforted and strengthened, we left the Cathedral, ready to brave whatever new trials should be in store for us.

We went straight to the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in Walnut street to make known to them the sad intelligence. Mother Brennan, Superior of the House, and Mother A. Keller, her Assistant, heartily sympathized with us and advised us to go to Eden Hall. Here it was decided, that we should leave the house in Walnut Street at once, and make our home at Eden Hall, until orders from Rome would arrive. This we considered the wisest thing to do.

We returned to Philadelphia, October 30th. We asked Mrs. Drexel, who had gone to a great expense in fitting up our house, what we should do with the furniture. She answered with that gentleness proper to her: "Give everything to the Grey Sisters of the Italian Mission." This we did. The Sisters were glad to get so many useful things, yet sorry, too, to receive them from us under such circumstances. Having sent away everything, we knelt down in one of the rooms, and fervently offered up three Hail Marys for the Archbishop, and all those who had been instrumental in sending us away, as we did not wish to bear any ill will against any one. Then we shut up the house, returned the key to the Archbishop, and went to stay with our friends at Eden Hall. Here we inhabited a small cottage, which we called S. Clare's. Sister Elizabeth, our Postulant, remained with us.

During our stay at Eden Hall, every one was extremely kind to us. They all combined to cheer us up and to make us forget our trials and troubles. On Christmas day especially, a number of useful presents were given us, to which

Mother Charlotte McNally, the Superior of the House, who always playfully called us *her* Poor Clares, added a generous donation which we put by for our future establishment. In addition to Mother Bouvier and Mother C. McNally, we must also mention Mother H. Smith. To these three good ladies we are especially indebted. May God bless and reward them in the manner He knows best!

V.

Brighter Prospects.

AN UNEXPECTED OFFER FROM NEW ORLEANS.

There lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, a devout lady, Miss Hyllsted by name. She was very much attached to the Order of St. Francis, being a member of the Third Order. She had made an attempt to join the Poor Clares in France, but failed. She was now very anxious to see the Poor Clares established in America. Learning quite accidentally of our existence and present condition in the country, she went straight to the Most Rev. Napoleon J. Perché, (1) who was then Archbishop of New Orleans, and begged of him to invite us to his diocese, promising him that she would take care to see us safely established.

Thus it came to pass that, on the 10th of December, 1876, we received an offer from Archbishop Perché to allow us to settle in New Orleans. Great was our joy, as well as that of our friends. We gratefully accepted the invitation, and wrote off to Rome for confirmation.

A favorable reply was received, March 7, 1877; and we, at once, got ready to depart. Mother Bouvier accompanied us to Philadelphia. Mrs. Drexel had prepared a nice little feast for us, and invited her three sisters to meet us at her house.

(1) Consecrated Bishop March 21, 1879, appointed Archbishop of New Orleans May 25, 1870; died in December, 1883.

That same evening we started on our journey with the good wishes and prayers of our dear friends. God reward their charity !

March 10th we arrived at Atlanta, Georgia, where we were obliged to stay over night. We greatly enjoyed the view of the river. In the morning, we went in search of a church, and found the convent of the Sisters of Charity of our Lady. We were, however, too late for Mass. But the kind Sisters served us with a good breakfast.

We then continued our journey by way of Mobile and finally approached New Orleans. We shall never forget the terror we experienced in passing over the bridge. It was leaning quite to one side, and the wooden posts were cracking at every step. We fervently recommended our poor souls to God, for we never expected to pass over it in safety. We heard that it actually broke down shortly afterwards. We hope no lives were lost. Since then, a fine new bridge has been constructed.

We arrived at New Orleans at 11:45 a. m., and were met at the depot by the Rev. Fr. Anstaett, Secretary of the Archbishop. Our first visit was to his Grace, the Archbishop. The good old Prelate gave us a truly paternal welcome. No father could have been kinder to his children. Our hearts were full of joy and gratitude.

Fr. Anstaett then conducted us to the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, who, in this city also, again proved to be our best friends.

March 13th, at 4:00 p. m., Miss Hyllsted came to take us to our new home. It was a nice, clean cottage, situated on Flotte Street, in the parish of S. Maurice.

Next day, March 14th, Holy Mass was celebrated in the little cottage by His Grace, the Archbishop, assisted by Fr. Anstaett. Several other priests, and a number of Ladies, were also present. We received Holy Communion from the hands of the Archbishop. Some of the Ladies also com-

municated. After Mass, the Archbishop gave a little instruction on the importance and efficacy of prayer, showing how our lives were chiefly devoted to prayer and contemplation. In conclusion, he exhorted the Ladies and other visitors to assist us generously in our temporal needs in order to share in the advantages arising from the powerful prayers offered up in return.

We then entertained our visitors at breakfast, though, by the way, they themselves had provided the eatables upon the table. Everything passed off nicely. The Archbishop was pleased in seeing his wishes accomplished. A holy joy seemed to fill the hearts of all present.

Before leaving, his Grace solemnly blessed the little chapel and the entire house, and then departed with an earnest wish for our happiness and success.

And indeed, everything went on quite smoothly and comfortably. Fr. Anstaett came every day to say Mass for us in our little chapel. We tried to observe our Holy Rule as well as we could. We rose three times a week for midnight office. We even managed to perform all the ceremonies of Holy Week.

As to our material wants, we never suffered any need, thanks to the kindness and generosity of our friends. God reward them, in this life, and in the next!

With the blessing and the sanction of the Archbishop, we had already commenced to collect funds for the building of a proper monastery. Another Postulant had joined us, whom we called Sister Agnes. But we were not left to enjoy our new home long.

FRESH TRIALS.

April 18th, Miss Hyllsted left us quite unexpectedly. We were sorry, especially as we could assign no reason for her sudden departure. She had been very good and kind ot

us. In fact, our establishment was due to her influence.[1]

June 17th, we were surprised by a visit of the Very Rev. Fr .Gregory Yanknecht, Minister Provincial of the German Province of the Sacred Heart of St. Louis, Mo. July 25th, he called a second tlme, and without further ado, told us to get ready to leave New Orleans, and go to Cleveland, Ohio. We never questioned his reasons, or inquired into his motives. We simply bowed our heads, and prepared for our departure, though we confess, we did so with a heavy heart. We felt especially sorry for the good Archbishop, who had been so kind to us, and for our numerous friends, whose benefactions would now seem to have been given in vain.

We packed our things and got ready without saying a word to anybody. August 2nd we celebrated the Feast of the Indulgence of Portiuncula. A number of people visited the little chapel to gain the indulgence. It was then we told the news of our departure to some of our friends, who were indeed very sorry to hear it. Next day, August 3d, we disposed of the furniture of the house and chapel, which was given to the College of S. Isidore. August 4th, we shut up the cottage on Flotte Street, returned the key to Mr. Pierre, from whom it had been rented, and went to the Ladies of the Sacred Heart on Dumaine Street. Here a number of Ladies came to bid us farewell. Finally, August 6th, we left for Cleveland.

AT CLEVELAND.

It was nine o'clock in the evening of the 9th day of August when we arrived at Cleveland, Ohio. Father Gregory himself met us at the depot, and took us to our new abode, situated at 1116 Broadway street Everything was nicely

[1] Miss Hyllsted died a few years ago. Though she had left us, she did not cease to be our friend. She even tried once more to join the Order after we were settled at Omaha; but again she failed. God rest her soul !

arranged for our reception. Mr. and Mrs. Bittner, our neighbors, who had been hard at work arranging things, were waiting to give us a welcome. After a little refreshments, Father Gregory gave us his blessing, and returned to his convent in the city. Our kind neighbors also retired, and we were left to ourselves.

On the following day, August 10th., the feast of our dear S. Lawrence, Holy Mass was said, for the first time, in our little oratory by Father Gregory. Our new home was dedicated to our Lady of the Angels.

The first few days were spent in putting things into proper order. Mrs. Bittner helped us indoors. Some Lay-Brothers of the Franciscan Convent in the city worked in the grounds, planting, painting and carpentering.

September 15th., we received a new bell for our little chapel. A small belfry had already been built. It was blessed by Father Kilian, and christened Maria Angela Clara.

October 12th, his Lordship, the Right Rev. Richard Gilmour, D. D., Bishop of Cleveland, [1] paid us his first visit. He told us he had received us upon the recommendation of Dr. Chatard. He expected good results from our stay in the city. He hoped that our presence would lessen the old prejudices of non-Catholics and influence Catholics to advance in faith and piety. He assured us of his good will and protection, and encouraged us in every way. He inspected the house and garden, and expressed himself pleased with everything. Having blessed us, he departed, leaving us greatly consoled with his kind visit.

November 15 th., our two Postulants, Sisters Elizabeth and Agnes, went to the convent of the Good Shepherd to attend the annual Retreat of the community. This they did in preparation for the reception of the holy habit. The Retreat

(1) Second Bishop of Cleveland, consecrated April 14th., 1872, died April 13th. 1891.

was being preached by one of the Franciscan Fathers. They returned to us on the 21st in the evening, well confirmed in their holy vocation.

Once More In Search Of a Home.

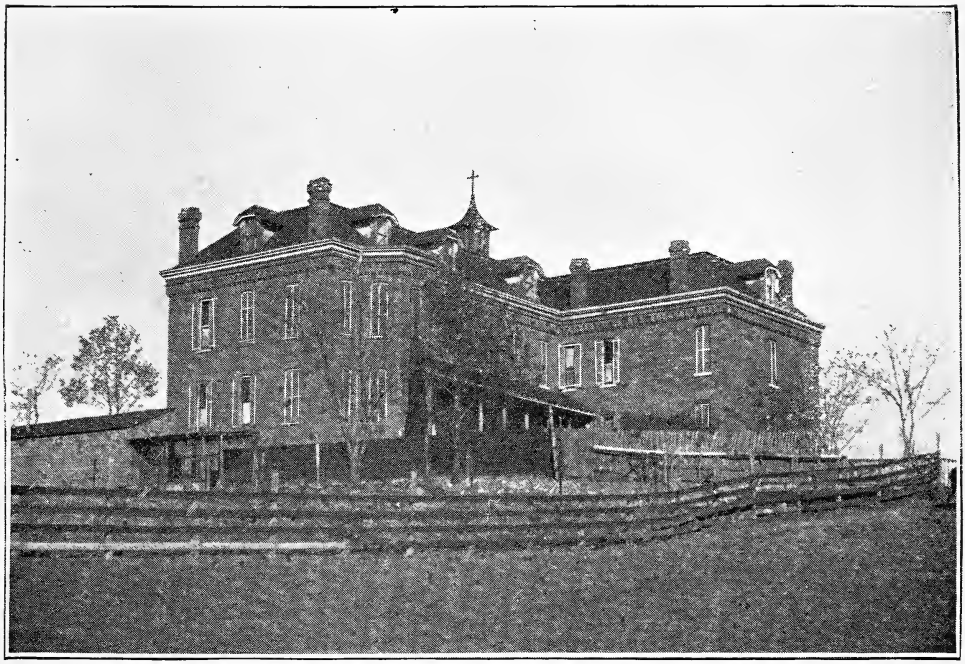
So far, everything was progressing well. But we had not yet seen the end of our troubles.

December 14th., at 8 p. m., while we were saying Matins in our little chapel, we heard a knock at the door. Sister Veronica who had been received as an Extern sister went to see who was there, and came back to tell us, that Fr. Gregory and Fr. Kilian wished to see us. We begged to be excused for a little while, until we had finished our prayers, and then went to the parlor. Here we were told by Fr. Gregory in Italian, that he had some very important news for us. He informed us that a number of German Poor Clares were on their way to Cleveland; in fact, they would arrive the very next day; that we were to be joined to them, making a fusion of the two communities; and that we were to conform to their usages in every detail. This was the first intimation we had of the matter. We bowed our heads in silence.

December 15th., at eleven o'clock in the morning, the new community arrived. There were five Sisters, four Choir Nuns, Mother Mary Veronica, Abbess, Mother Josepha, Vicaress, together with Sisters M. Hyacintha and M. Theresia, and Sister M. Margaretha, an Extern Sister. When they arrived at the entrance of the enclosure, we received them with the kiss of peace, and together we proceeded to the chapel, chanting the Magnificat.

December 28th., our three Postulants received the holy habit. Fr. Kilian performed the ceremony. At the same time, he also put up the strict enclosure.

God knows we did our best to carry out the injunctions of Fr. Gregory. But God also alone knows, how difficult it



MONASTERY OF S. CLARE, OMAHA, NEB.,
COMPLETED IN 1880.

(*From a Photo taken in 1900.*)

was for us. We had no fault to find with the good Sisters. They were extremely kind and obliging. But we found it impossible to accustom ourselves to their German ways. Nothing but German was spoken; most of the prayers, and public reading was in German; not to mention a number of other things which, though small in themselves, were too much for us. Had we been young novices, we should in time, have grown used to everything. But we were too old to become novices again.

Besides this, there were certain rights, which had been directly conferred upon us by our Superiors in Rome, rights that we were not obliged to renounce, until they were taken from us by those who had granted them.

No one will, therefore, blame us, if we soon made up our minds, to relinquish the convent in the possession of our good German Sisters, and go to look elsewhere for a new establishment.

We accordingly wrote to his Grace, the Archbishop of New Orleans, begging of him to receive us back again into his diocese. We got an immediate reply, telling us to return by all means We also explained matters to our Father General in Rome, and likewise received his sanction for the step we were taking.

We left Cleveland February 26th., 1878. Our three novices and another Postulant, who had come lately, chose to accompany us. We were truly sorry to depart from our kind German Sisters. It was not their fault that we were leaving. We did not omit to call upon Fr. Gregory and Fr. Kilian to bid them farewell. We also intended to see the Bishop before leaving the city. In fact, civility, if nothing else, demanded it, as he had received us, and had always been so kind to us. But we were told by the Fathers that there was no need for it; and hence in submission to their request, we left, without seeing the Bishop.

Good Mrs. Bittner, together with Mrs. McGrath and her

son, who had been great friends to us, accompanied us to the depot to wish us God-speed on our new travels.

We had decided that, before returning to New Orleans, we would make an attempt to collect funds to purchase a proper site and build a regular Monastery. We, therefore, started for New York, where we were known already, and where we hoped to find friends, willing to help. When we arrived at Albany, Mother Costanza, together with Sister Elizabeth and our Postulants, remained there for the purpose of collecting. Mother Maddalena and the others continued their journey to New York, where they went to stay at their old friends, the Grey Sisters of 31st street. Mother Costanza and her companions arrived shortly after, and stopped at S. Elizabeth's Hospital close by in the same street. But they did not remain long, and went out West on a begging tour. Passing through Omaha, they made the acquaintance of a wealthy gentleman, John A. Creighton, well known for his great liberality and generosity. They were told by him, that he would assist them to establish themselves if it was agreeable to the Bishop. Mother Costanza at once wrote to Mother Maddalena concerning this matter, telling her to leave New York, and proceed to Omaha, to see what could be done. Mother Maddelena did so, and left New York August 12th., the memorable day, on which three years previously, they had left their Monastery in Rome.

They arrived at Omaha, August 15th, just when the people were coming from Mass at the Cathedral, as it was a holyday. They received hospitality at the house of Mr. Donovan at Harney Street, the same place where Mother Costanza had been entertained during her stay in Omaha. At four o'clock in the afternoon, they went to pay their respects to the Right Rev. James O'Connor, D. D.,[1] who was then Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska; for Omaha had not

[1] He was consecrated Bishop and appointed Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska, August 20th, 1876, and appointed first Bishop of Omaha, October 2nd, 1885; died May 27th, 1890,

yet been erected into a diocese. They had known him in Philadelphia; and, while at Eden Hall, they had done some work for him in preparation for the ceremony of his consecration. He had told them, at that time, that, when he was settled in his diocese, they would have no difficulty in being accepted by him.

When he saw the Sisters, he at once recognized Mother Maddalena and gave her a kind welcome, which he also extended to her companions. Being informed of the object of their visit, he told them they must have a little patience. The city of Omaha was only just springing up. The Catholics were not very numerous; and only a few of them could be called wealthy. As for himself personally, he had nothing to offer them, but his good wishes. To rely, therefore, solely on the charity of the Catholics in general, would be equivalent to tempting Divine Providence. But if Mr. Creighton, or some other kind benefactor, would build a Monastery for them, and establish them on a firm footing, he would only be too well pleased to retain them in Omaha. He counselled them to remain at Mr. Donovan's, until Mr. Creighton should return from his summer-trip. This they did, but afterwards the Bishop sent them to the Sisters of Mercy at Mount S. Mary's. While there, they received a copy of their Holy Rule in English, sent to them, at the request of Bishop Connor, from His Eminence Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, London, England.

VI.

Canonical Establishment of the Order in Omaha.

The Hon. Count John A. Creighton.

Before proceeding further with our narrative, we must say a word about our dear, generous Benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Creighton.

John A. Creighton came of an excellent Catholic family in Perry County, Ohio. His parents were not blessed with a superabundance of the goods of this earth. But they gave him that which is worth more than all the riches of the world, a thorough practical and Christian education. From his childhood, they trained him to habits of industry and honesty, and instilled into his tender heart the seeds of faith, piety and charity.

By dint of hard work, and steady perseverance, he succeeded, with God's blessing, in all his business transactions, and acquired greet wealth. Considering himself as God's steward of the blessings conferred upon him, he employed his wealth for the welfare of his fellowmen, both social and religious.

His name will ever be associated with the early history of the West. He was one of the five who composed the Vigilance Committee of Montana. Later on, he was appointed commissioner of the army in the Indian war by the Governor of Montana, with the rank of Colonel.

In June, 1868, he was married by the Right Rev. Bishop O'Gorman, to Miss Emily Wareham, and settled in Omaha, where he has been living since then.

It is a matter of frequent comment that the West cannot boast of the magnificent Churches and Institutions such as are found in the East. Whatever may be the truth of this

assertion, the city of Omaha is certainly an exception, owing to the benevolence and generosity of Mr. Creighton.

Though the famous Creighton University, founded in 1876, and conducted by the Jesuit Fathers, was a direct outcome of a testamentary bequest of his brother Edward Creighton, still Mr. and Mrs. John A. Creighton have always been the most generous supporters of this Institution, and their magnificent gifts made it possible to erect the handsome S. John's Collegiate Church.

In 1892, Mr. John A. Creighton founded a College for Medical Students, known as the Creighton Medical College.

After the death of his beloved wife, which took place in 1888, he erected S. Joseph's Hospital, known as the Creighton Monument. His wife had left a bequest of $50,000, which he tripled in order to raise up a fitting monument to her loving memory. The vast buildings and magnificent grounds represent an outlay of over $200,000.

In addition to these public manifestations of his faith and charity, there are thousands of private acts of charity known only to God and the happy recipients of his bounty.

It is to this truly Christian and benevolent gentleman we owe our establishment in Omaha.

Well did he deserve the high honor and distinction conferred upon him by His Holines, Pope Leo XIII., who was pleased to create him a Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

To him may be fitly applied these words of S. Scupture: "Generations will rise up, and call him blessed!"

First House at Omaha.

Mr. Creighton returned to Omaha sometime in September, and the Sisters had the pleasure of meeting him at Mr. Donovan's. He, at once, took a lively interest in them, and promised to do all he could for them. Together with Mr.

Donovan, he went in search of a suitable dwelling, where the Sisters might begin their religious life. They secured a small House, composed of four rooms and a kitchen, in 17th Street; between Cass and Webster Streets, on the west side of the city.

September 27th, Mother Maddalena and her companions left the Sisters of Mercy and moved to their new home. Mother Costanza was still absent. In the evening the Rev. Fr. Quinn, of the Church of the Holy Family, came to bless the house. A little Altar had been erected in a small room behind the parlor. Here the Sisters assembled to say their office and perform their other devotions.

September 28th, they were visited by the Bishop, accompanied by Fr. Quinn. Seeing the little oratory, he told Fr. Quinn to get everything ready for the celebration of Holy Mass and the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. When Mr. Creighton heard of it, he at once had a larger table put up. The Bishop sent a tabernacle, used at the Cathedral during Holy week; Fr. Quinn sent a crucifix; and by October 4th, the feast of the holy Patriarch, S. Francis, everything was in readiness for the first Mass in their new little home.

What a beautiful day on which to have their first Mass! How they thanked their dear Lord that day in Holy Communion for all His tender mercies towards them! How they begged of Him to fill them with the true spirit of their Seraphic Father S. Francis! How happy they now felt to have their dear Lord constantly residing with them in their humble oratory! With what fervor and earnestness they tried to pray before His Divine Presence!

October 5th, Mass was celebrated in the little oratory by Fr. Cassidy, who had just been ordained priest by the Bishop in the Cathedral the previous day, October 4th.

October 6th, Fr. Rhullier, another new priest, ordained on the same day, came to say Mass. This Father also said

Mass for them a number of times afterwards. On the days when no Mass was said in the chapel, they used to go to Mass in the church of the Holy Family. On Sundays and Feast days, the Rev. Fr. Peter, S. J., would enter the chapel on his way to the Sisters of Mercy, to give them Holy Communion. He was also their Father Confessor.

SECOND HOUSE AT OMAHA.

November 2d, Mother Costanza and her companions returned from California. How many things they had to relate, what trials and difficulties they had passed through, how they had even been imposed upon and plundered! We earnestly thanked God for being once more united together in community.

But as our house now proved too small, we began to look about for a more suitable dwelling. In this matter, kind Mrs. Creighton gave us great assistance. At length, a convenient house was found, situated at No. 1612 Burt Street, belonging to Mr. J. G. Lee.

It was November 5th, when we moved to our second House. Fr. Quinn kindly blessed it for us. Next day Holy Mass was celebrated, and we had again the happiness of having our dear Lord in our midst. The Bishop, Mr. Creighton, and other persons of note honored us by their visit. During our stay at Burt Street, we observed our holy Rule as much as we could. The priests were very kind to us, saying mass for us on week days, whenever it was possible. Fr. Colaneri especially was very kind to us in this respect. But on Sundays we were, as a rule, obliged to hear mass at the Church of the Holy Family.

As to our temporal necessities, God had inspired a number of generous souls, so that we never suffered any actual

want, although at times, we had to do without certain little comforts or conveniences. But that was precisely as it should have been. How could we otherwise have been called poor? And where would have been the merit of poverty?

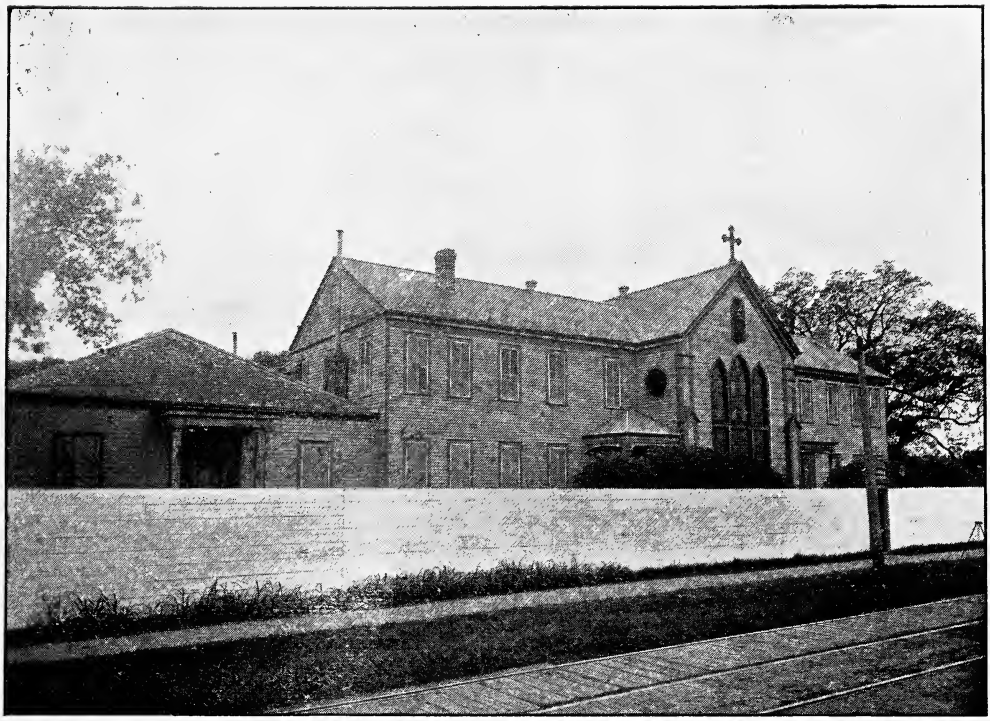
Amongst our many friends, we must mention in particular Mr. J. G. Lee. For quite a while we noticed that, every morning while we were at mass, some one came, and performed a number of little services for us, sawing and chopping wood, putting in coal, bringing provisions, and doing numerous other similar acts of kindness. For a time we did not know who it was, and we used to call our unknown friend our Saint Joseph. But one morning, our good Saint Joseph left his saw behind him; and when afterwards he came round to look for it, we then discovered who our Saint Joseph was. It was Mr. Lee. He continued to perform these little acts of kindness all along. He usually called each morning and evening to see if there was anything to do for him. And whatever he did, was done by him with great faith and devotion. He did it for the spouses of our Lord, as he said, and he even deemed himself unworthy to be allowed to do them any service at all.

But our chief benefactors were Mr. and Mrs. Creighton. It was their custom to call personally each Saturday to bring us provisions. And they were not ashamed to carry them to the house in their own arms, to the great admiration of our neighbors and of ours.

May God, in His infinite charity, grant to all our friends and benefactors every grace and blessing, spiritual and temporal, and a superabundant reward in the glory of His Eternal Kingdom!

THE FIRST DEATH IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Sister Mary Clare, one of our novices, had been ailing for some time, and was gradually growing worse, in spite



MONASTERY OF S. CLARE, NEW ORLEANS, LA.,
Erected in 1891.

[*From a Photo.*]

of all the kind attention that was bestowed upon her. Dr. Quinlan, a charitable physician, gave her medical assistance, gratis for the love of God. But seeing that she derived no benefit from his treatment, Mr. Creighton brought his own physician, Dr. Grossman, a man highly eminent and experienced in his profession. Yet God knew what was best for the poor sufferer.

January 21st., a strange incident happened. Fr. Ambrose, a Franciscan Father, of Columbus, Neb., came that day to Omaha. When he got out at the depot, he felt as though some person was physically urging him to come along. He said to himself, there must be something for me to do here. He was almost a stranger in the city, and had no idea as to where we lived. Wonderful to say, yielding to the influence that was guiding him, he walked straight into our house on Burt street. Seeing our poor invalid on the point of death, he knew at once what was required of him. God wished to give our dear child the grace to make her solemn vows before departing from this world, a great grace indeed, as it is considered a second Baptism. Fr. Ambrose addressed her a few words on the subject, and then asked her if she was ready to take her vows. She expressed her willingness with the greatest joy, and pronounced the formula of the solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, according to the form of life given by S. Francis and by S. Clare. She had hardly uttered the last word, when she inclined her head, and closed her eyes. Her beautiful soul, cleansed and purified by the sacrifice she had just made to God, had left the body, and gone to heaven to enjoy an endless reward, and intercede for us before the throne of the Most High.

Mr. Creighton had an iron coffin in which the body of Mrs. Edward Creighton had been transported from Philadelphia. This he kindly placed at our disposal. The body was taken to the Church of the Holy Family, where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up for the repose of

her soul. A number of priests were present; and the church was filled with people. The hearse was followed to the grave by two carriages. In the one were the priests, in the other Mr. and Mrs. Creighton, and several other friends. Mrs. Creighton was the only lady to venture out into the cold, in spite of the piercing north wind that was blowing that morning. It was another proof of her exceeding great charity.

We will here add a few words about our dear departed Sister. Miss Elizabeth Baily came of a good English family, living in the city of London, England. Both her parents were good Catholics, and she received a good Christian education. Through a reverse of fortune, Miss Baily was compelled to earn her own livelihood. For four years she was a governess in one of the noble families in Paris, France. She then came to America where she had no difficulty in finding employment as governess, speaking both French and English fluently. She was ever God-fearing, and impressed all who knew her by her truly Christian and blameless conduct. She was very exact in the fulfillment of her religious duties, going to confession and communion frequently.

She was introduced to us in New York by the Rev. Fr. Lopinto, S. J.

She was very devout to the Blessed Sacrament, and as a reward for her great love and fervor, our Lord was pleased to manifest to her His Divine Presence in a perceptible manner by the diffusion of a most delicious fragrance. This she experienced, whenever she knelt before the Tabernacle wherein our Lord reposed. One day, she had gone to S. Paul's Church, for the purpose of making her confession. While waiting for the arrival of the priest, she entered a side chapel to say her prayers. Here she perceived the same heavenly fragrance; yet there was no light, or any other outward sign, to indicate the presence of our Divin

Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. But she knew our Lord was there. In fact, when after confession, she returned to the Chapel, the Sacristan came to place a lamp before the altar, remarking that he had forgotten to do so. This fact she manifested to Mother Costanza, who was her mistress of Novices.

She likewise had a great devotion to the Passion of our Divine Lord.

When she made her general confession at Cleveland before the reception of the holy habit, she did so amidst an abundant shedding of tears.

Many other remarkable things could be told to illustrate her interior worth and saintliness. But let her memory remain hidden and unknown in the eyes of the world. It is better so. It will make her shine all the more gloriously among the white-robed army of Blessed Spirits before the throne of God.

VISITED BY A CYCLONE.

There was a very desirable lot of six and a half acres of land on Shinn Reserve, between Hamilton and Caldwell streets to the North and South, and 28th and 30th streets to the East and West. As it was for sale, our kind benefactor, Mr. Creighton, purchased it for our new Monastery. The place is beautifully situated on an eminence overlooking the city and the river Missouri.

April 4th., 1880, the workmen commenced to prepare the ground for laying the foundations. Brother Adrian, one of the Franciscan Lay-brothers of the Province of S. Louis, Mo., who was a thorough architect, had drawn up plans for the new Monastery. The design was gothic in style, giving the building a very imposing and picturesque appearance. But it was rejected by the Bishop as being too grand and unbecoming our state of poverty and simplicity. New plans

of a simpler kind were prepared at the request of the Bishop.

The contractors were not long in commencing the building in earnest. Good Brother Adrian supervised the work for three months, doing a great deal of manual labor himself. But he could not stay to see it finished as he was called away by his superiors to work elsewhere.

We often went for a walk to see how the work was progressing. Sunday afternoon, May 23rd., which was Trinity Sunday, some of the Sisters went out as usual. A strong wind had sprung up; and as they were seated on the ground, small pieces of mortar kept falling on them from time to time. They grew somewhat uneasy, being afraid the walls might suddenly break down upon them; and so they did not tarry long. Later on, in the evening, the wind rose higher, and during the night, part of the building fell to the ground in three different places. Next morning, the Sisters went to view the damage, which was not, however, considered to amount to much, and was repaired very soon.

But on Saturday, June 5th, a terrible disaster befell us. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, when a fearful storm arose. We happened to be in the parlor of our House on Burt Street. Seeing the big clouds of dust, driven along by the fury of the wind, we said, half in fun: "May be, it is the dust of our new Monastery," yet hoping all the same, that God would save us from such a calamity. Hence we hastened to the chapel, and prayed that God would spare the new building.

We heard no more that evening. But next morning we were informed by Father Peter, S. J., who had come to say Mass in our little chapel, that the entire edifice had been completely demolished by a cyclone. We turned cold at this fearful sad intelligence; and it took some time before we recovered from the shock. But we all endeavored to resign ourselves to God's holy will, and were thankful that the

catastrophe had occurred before the building was inhabited.

On the Monday, we were told, the whole city had gone out to view the ruins. Some were sorry, some were glad, some even laughed.

Next day, we, too, ventured forth. Yes, indeed, the whole building had been completely razed to the ground, and nothing was to be seen but one huge mass of ruins scattered all over the ground. It forcibly reminded us of the description we had read of the sea coast after a terrific tempest, when the entire coast is littered all over with the debris of the vessels wrecked on the ocean. What a sad sight! We sat down on a heap of ruins to gaze upon the melancholy scene, and thus, with the daughters of Israel of old, did we mourn over the destruction of our beloved Jerusalem. Long we remained there seated, lost in grief and sorrow. All was still around us. The air was calm and peaceful. Nothing disturbed us in our solitude. Once a buggy drove up with two gentlemen. We knew them, and bowed to them. But they did not venture to speak to us, seeing our great affliction. Even the little birds, that were flying about, seemed to hush their voices, and move about noiselessly, as though fearing to distract us in our silent contemplation, looking at us askance with their bright little eyes, as though out of pity, and then flying heavenward, as though to remind us that there is One Who hath care of all things. Then we recalled the words of our Savior: "Behold the birds of the air; for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. And your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?"

THE NEW MONASTERY.

We were much afraid that the disaster should discourage our Novices and Postulants, and our friends, especially Mr. Creighton, who had already done so much for us. But

thanks be to God, none of our fears were realized; on the contrary, the calmity only confirmed our Novices and Postulants all the more in their holy vocation and drew our friends around us all the more closely.

In the month of July the work was resumed, but it proceeded very slowly. It was not until June 23d, of the following year 1881, that we moved into the new Monastery, though the building was not yet quite complete.

A temporary Altar was put up in the community room, for the Chapel was not yet ready. Father Coloneri, accompanied by Mr. Creighton, removed the Blessed Sacrament from our Home on Burt Street to our new abode. With grateful hearts, we gathered around His Divine Presence and entreated Him to bless the dwelling and never permit His Divine Majesty to be offended in this hallowed place, either by us or any others that might come after us. Crosses and trials, of one sort or another, would still be our lot, even within the sacred precincts of a Monastery. But we also knew that He, without Whose will or permission, nothing happens, would give us ample grace to endure them patiently for love of Him.

August 2d, feast of Portiuncula, our new chapel was thronged with pious visitors.

August 10th, the feast of dear S. Lawrence, was indeed a memorable day for us. On that day, our kind and generous benefactor, Mr. Creighton, came to hand over to us all the bills of the building, fully paid, as well as the deeds of the property, donated to the Monastery by Mr. and Mrs. Creighton. Human words were wholly inadequate to express our gratitude. God alone can reward such charity.

July 5, 1882, the canonical enclosure was established, and we commenced to observe fully the strict Rule of our holy Mother S. Clare.

* * *

Here, the history written by Mother Maddalena and Mother Costanza is discontinued.

After a series of trials and diffculties, the object for which their superiors had sent them to this country, had at length been accomplished. Thanks to the blessing of God and the aid of generous friends, the two Sisters had succeeded in establishing on American soil an American community of Poor Clares.

SOME LETTERS OF FR. HECKER TO SISTERS MADDALENA AND COSTANZA.

As we have seen in the *Memoirs*, the saintly Father Hecker was a true friend of the two Sisters Maddalena and Costanza in their trials and difficulties. To him they often went for consolation and encouragement. We here reproduce some of the letters addressed to the Sisters. They are characteristic of the man and need no comment, as they speak for themselves.

* * *

JULY 20, 1876.

"DEAR SISTER MAGDELINE: Your letter shows clearly that God has taken your affairs in His own hands. He leaves you no human prospect whatever. Every door appears shut against you. *Ipse faciet.* O blessed obscurity which forces the soul to look for light and guidance to God alone! O blessed perplexity which throws the soul in entire dependence on God! This is the real contemplative life.

"Do you not believe that the Holy Spirit could change and would change the minds and hearts of those to whom you have appealed, were it best to do so? That He does not, is not this, His not doing, also a sign of His divine action and a mark of His favor?

"There appears only one thing left for you to do, and

that is to profit by this divine action. But how? Why, as often as your mind is disturbed, and your heart grows faint, take some pills—made in equal parts of the following ingredients: Resignation, Patience, and Fidelity to the Divine Will.

"Who knows but after all it may be the will of Divine Providence that when you have learned, by your present trials, the greatest of all lessons in spiritual life, absolute dependence upon God, utterly regardless of all else whatsoever, you will find the intention and purpose for which you undertook your voyage is the one He has appointed for your first work in this country.

"May the light to see, and the strength to follow at all costs, the holy will of God be imparted to our souls!

"Faithfully yours in Xto,

"I. T. HECKER.

"God bless you and your sister!"

* * *

"NEW YORK, September 16, 1876.

"MY DEAR SISTERS: I have been absent for some time, and this is the only reason why your former letter has not received an answer.

"God has rewarded your resignation and patience, but the end of your difficulties has not come to pass. You have the task of laying the foundation of a community of S. Clare such as will approve itself to God and your holy Foundress. May the Holy Spirit be your guide in this important task!

"My intention was to leave for Philadelphia on Monday next, and I had hoped to see you there and congratulate you. If you will be in Philadelphia before the close of the week, send me word, at my usual address, at once.

"When in Philadelphia, where I have some friends, I will not forget you and your requests in your former letter.

"May God bless you both with the fullness of His Spirit,

MONASTERY OF POOR CLARES, CLEVELAND, OHIO,
FOUNDED IN 1881,

(*Taken from a Photo, 1900.*)

until you become great saints and the models of all those who may be called to your new community.

"Believe me ever yours faithfully,

"I. T. HECKER."

* * *

"November 4, 1876.

"MY DEAR SISTERS IN XTO: No, no; I do not smile at the contents of your letter. I sympathize with you, and see in your apparent misfortune the hand of Divine Providence. That hand seems to me to direct you to that point for which you left Rome.

"Your holy founder, S. Clare, is not idle in this matter; she is determined on making you in reality, as well as in name, her children.

"She began in the way of the Cross, and she wishes you to foliow her in imitation of our crucified Lord and Savior.

"Take up your cross. Take it up cheerfully, looking to Jesus, Mary and S. Clare, and all will be right in the end. There where you have been rejected you will in due season return in triumph.

"Go where you were sent. You will be received warmly and do God's work.

"God bless you, give you courage, and direct you in all your steps. Faithfully yours,

"I. T. HECKER."

* * *

"278 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK,
March 28, 1877.

"MY DEAR SISTERS: It is with great pleasure that I received your letter of the 4th of this month, and learned that you were to be settled in New Orleans under Archbishop Perché.

"It seems to me you have now obtained all the con-

ditions most favorable to the accomplishment of your design in coming to the United States. It now rests with you to make the beautiful flower of divine contemplation take root in the virginal soil of the church in our young Republic.

"I cannot conceive a nobler design, a greater work, and one fraught with more precious fruits.

"It will be my constant prayer that God may give you the grace of receiving the spirit of your holy foundress, S. Clare, and be the nucleus of gathering together those souls on whom God has bestowed the vocation of contemplative life.

"There are those who believe that our century, and above all our country, is antagonistic to this kind of life; as to the forms of its expression, this may to some extent be true. But my most intimate conviction is, that not only the gift of contemplation is necessary to these, but God will not fail to bestow this grace on certain elect souls in our day, and precisely among us. It is the only counterweight that can keep this headlong activity of our generation from ending in irreligion and its own entire destruction.

"I trust that the trials, the mortifications and disappointments which you have received since your arrival here have served to deepen the conviction in your souls of the high vocation to which you have been called, and, like that of your holy Foundress, your names will be held in benediction in common with hers in the future of the church in our beloved country.

"May God's Holy Spirit guide you always and in all things!

"Faithfully yours,

"I. T. HECKER."

Other Establishments.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

When, in February, 1878, Sisters Maddalena and Costanza, together with their companions, left Cleveland, it was their intention to return to New Orleans, and once more establish themselves in that city. But this idea was abandoned when, through the generosity of the Hon. Mr. Creighton, they obtained a firm footing in Omaha. There were, however, a number of persons in New Orleans, who were still very anxious to have a Monastery of Poor Clares in their midst. Miss Hyllsted was one of them. But the one who exerted herself most, was Mrs. G. Gabriel Tujague, née Moran.

Archbishop Perché died in 1883, and was succeded by the Most Rev. F. X. Leray, D. D.[1] It was to him that Mrs. Tujague appealed repeatedly, begging of him to invite the Poor Clares to New Orleans. The Archbishop at length consented, and wrote to Omaha. His letter arrived at Omaha, May 31st, 1885; and June 16th, Mother Maddalena accompanied by Sister Mary Francis Moran, niece of Mrs. Tujague, and Sister Mary Colette Murphy, started for New Orleans. Through the kindness of Miss Hyllsted, they obtained hospitality at the convent of the Benedictine Sisters of Holy Trinity Church on Dauphine Street. Here they remained three months.

Meanwhile they had been looking out for an independent location. At length, Mr. Edward Murry secured for them a small cottage on Magazine Street, near Austerlitz Street, which they rented, and fitted up as well as they could.

[1] Consecrated Bishop April 22nd, 1877, appointed Coadjuter Bishop of New Orleans October 23rd, 1879, promoted to the See of New Orleans in December, 1883; died September 23rd, 1887.

They moved into the new House October 4th, the feast of the Holy Patriarch, and began to observe the Religious life, as well as circumstances would permit.

In February, 1886, Mother Maddalena had to return to Omaha, on account of the sickness of her sister Costanza.

The two other Sisters were left alone in New Orleans. They had their trials and difficulties. Still they succeeded, with God's blessing, in purchasing a piece of land near the exposition ground. There was an old house on this ground, which was removed to one side. This the Sisters occupied, until the new Monastery was ready to receive them.

October 30th, 1890, Mother Costanza and Sister Mary Clare Tucker went to join the Sisters at New Orleans.

The new Monastery was completed in 1891, and the Sisters gladly took possession of it. Sister Mary Francis was appointed Mother Abbess by the Most Rev. Father General of the Franciscans in Rome. Seeing everything placed on a firm footing, Mother Costanza returned to Omaha, March 5th, 1891.

The Monastery is now in flourishing condition.

Cleveland and Chicago.

In 1877, the Rev. Father Kilian Schloesser, who was, at that time, Pastor of S. Joseph's and Superior of the Franciscan Convent at Cleveland, being duly authorized by his Provincial, the Very Rev. Fr. Gregory Yanknecht, purchased a house and several lots, located at the corner of Broadway and McBride Street, to serve as a Monastery of Poor Clares in this country. Sisters Maddalena and Costanza, together with their two Portulants, were told to leave New Orleans and settle down in Cleveland. They arrived August 9th, in the evening, and next morning, August 10th,

Holy Mass was offered up for them in their new home.

In October, 1877, five German Sisters were sent by the Very Rev. Father Provincial from Duesseldorf in Germany to join the Poor Clares in Cleveland. They arrived December 15th, after a long and rough voyage across the Atlantic.

In Februrary, 1878, Sisters Maddalena and Costanza, together with their companions, left Cleveland, with due authorization of their Superiors in Rome, in order to establish elsewhere a community of Poor Clares.

November 2nd, 1878, two more Sisters came from Holland to join those at Cleveland. A number of Postulants had, likewise, been admitted. This made their residence on Broadway too small. In other respects, too, it had become rather inconvenient. A more suitable site was, therefore, purchased on Perry Street, near S. Bridget's Church.

The new building was begun in the early part of 1881, and was ready for use in the month of December of the same year.

In 1890, Mother M. Veronica was sent to Chicago to establish another community of Poor Clares. The new Monastery, located on 23d and Laflin Streets, was opened April 29th, 1893, when Holy Mass was celebrated for the first time in their chapel.

EVANSVILLE.

Upon the death of Mr. H. Rietmann, his daughter, Miss Elizabeth Rietmann, who had joined the Order of Poor Clares in Omaha, under the name of Sister Mary S. Clare, generously offered the inheritance that would come to her share for the establishment of a new Monastery of Poor Clares in her native city, Evansville, Ind. The Right Rev. Francis Silas Chatard, Bishop of Indianapolis, in whose

diocese Evansville is situated, readily gave his consent, as he was an old friend of Sisters Maddalena and Costanza Bentivoglio. Necessary permission was likewise obtained from the Most Rev. Father Luigi of Parma in Rome, Minister General of the Order, and of his Eminence Cardinal Ledowchosky, Prefect of Propaganda. Bishop Chatard, being on a visit to Rome, in January, 1898, likewise obtained the blessing of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. for the erection of the new Monastery.

The undertaking was confided to the care of Sister Mary Charitas Burns and Sister Mary S. Clare Rietmann, who accordingly left Omaha and went to Evansville to settle all preliminary matters. A site of about two and one-half acres was purchased, by outside parties, on Kentucky Avenue between S. Clare and Cherry Streets, just inside the city limits.

After the contract had been signed and the work commenced, the Sisters found out, to their great disappointment, that the inheritance, which actually came to Sister Mary S. Clare, was not enough to pay even one-half of the expenses incurred for the present building; and thus the Monastery was burdened with a heavy debt.

January 14th, 1897, the Rev. Joseph Dickmann, Pastor of S. Mary's Church, laid and blessed the corner stone of the new building. He also said Mass for the first time in the new chapel, July 4th, of the same year.

July 31st, Mother Maddalena, with seven more Sisters, left Omaha to take posession of the new Monastery at Evansville.

August 12th, of the same year, the Right Rev. Bishop Chatard solemnly blessed and dedicated the new establishment, and, November 27th, he returned to Evansville to erect the canonical enclosure.

Among the numerous friends and benefactors of the Monastery special mention must be made of Rev. Joseph

Dickmann, the spiritual director of the community, and Mr. and Mrs. Henrich, who act as syndics of the Monastery.

* * *

These then are the present establishments of the Order of Poor Clares in the United States.

Although the Order is one, yet each Monastery is distinct and complete in itself. Each Monastery has its own Abbess, Vicaress, and other officials, and is authorized to receive new members. The members of each community are divided into Choir Nuns, who take solemn vows, and live inside the enclosure, and Extern-Sisters who live outside the enclosure of the Monastery. The former give themselves up wholly to a life of seclusion in prayer and penance, and such manual labor as befits their position. The chief feature of their occupation is Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. As to manual work, they are noted for every species of fine needlework and embroidery, especially for the use of churches. The Extern Sisters attend more directly to the temporal needs of the community.

Though the different Monasteries are independent of each other, still they keep up a friendly intercourse with one another, and its members may, with due permission, and for grave reasons, pass from one community to another.

The Monasteries of Poor Clares are usually under the jurisdiction of the Superiors of the First Order who, once a year, hold the canonical visitation. But some are under episcopal jurisdiction. In this country, only two are under the immediate jurisdiction of the Superiors of the Order, Omaha and Evansville; the other three are under episcopal jurisdiction.

Again, the two Monasteries of Cleveland and Chicago belong to the Reform of S. Colette. The other three observe the First Rule of S. Clare in its primitive rigor; and, although they never had any need of adopting the Reform of S. Colette, still, in practice, they observe the Constitutions

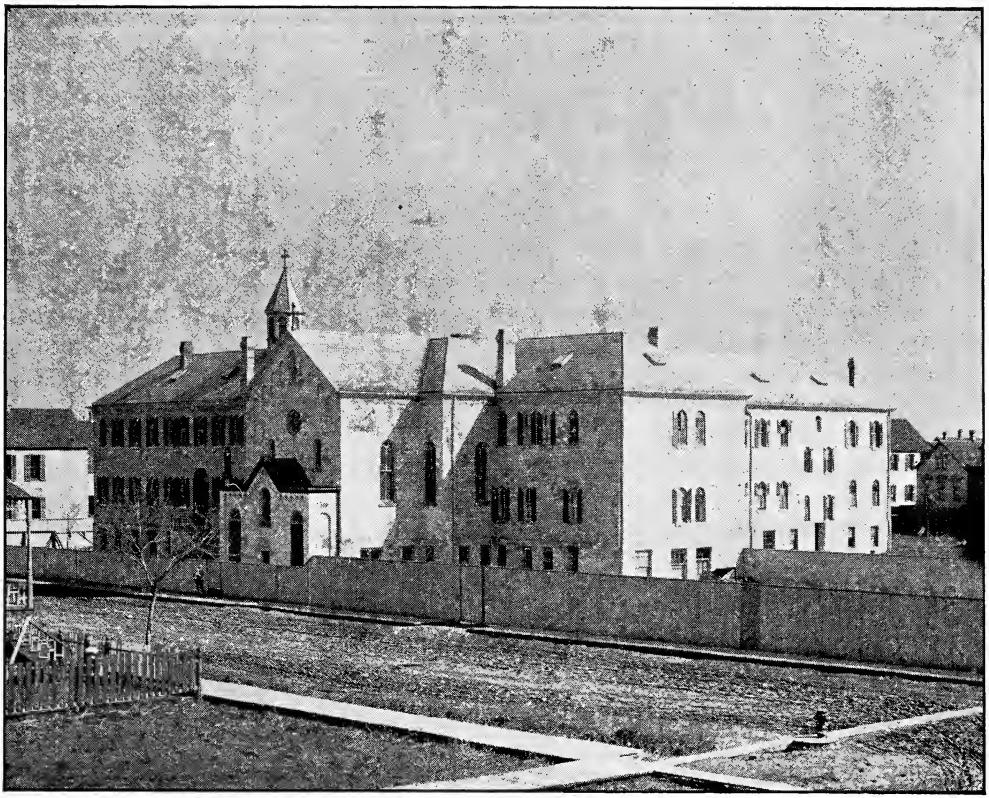
of S. Colette, in as much as they are a faithful interpretation of the Holy Rule according to the mind of S. Francis and S. Clare.

Yet the spirit is the same everywhere. Everywhere one is impressed with that characteristic trait of poverty, penance, and silence. Everywhere there rises up before the throne of God the sweet fragrance of the prayerful and penitential lives of these devoted daughters of S. Clare. And while they earn for themselves peace and happiness on earth, and a particular crown of glory in heaven, they necessarially draw down upon a sinful world an incessant shower of heavenly blessings.

* * *

October 4th, 1900, on the feast of the Holy Patriarch S. Francis, the Sisters of the Monastery of S. Clare, Evansville, celebrated, with great joy in the Lord, amidst the congratulations of their many friends and benefactors, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coming to this country of their beloved Mothers Maria Maddalena and Maria Costanza. The Right Rev. Bishop Chatard delivered an impressive sermon on the importance of the contemplative life.

May God bless and prosper the Institutes of the Princess of Poverty! May the Order extend its salutary influence far and near! And may thousands of devout earnest souls, craving for closer communion with God, find, within the seclusion of those hallowed cloisters, that peace and contentment, which the world cannot give, and which is but a foretaste of the everlasting peace with God in heaven!



MONASTERY OF POOR CLARES, CHICAGO, ILL.,
FOUNDED IN 1893.

(*From a Photo.*)

Appendix.

I.

PRAYER COMPOSED BY S. CLARE IN HONOR OF THE FIVE WOUNDS OF OUR LORD AND RECITED BY HER EACH DAY WITH MUCH FERVOR AND DEVOTION.

---

1. IN HONOR OF THE WOUND IN THE RIGHT HAND OF OUR DIVINE SAVIOR.

PRAISE and honor be given Thee, O my Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Sacred Wound in Thy Right Hand.

By this adorable wound, I beseech Thee to pardon me all the sins I have committed by thoughts, words and deeds, by neglect in Thy service, and by self-indulgence, both waking and sleeping.

Grant me the grace that, by a devout and frequent remembrance of Thy Holy Passion, I may honor Thy sacred wounds and the death which Thou didst endure for love of me; and that, by chastising my body, I may testify my gratitude for Thy sufferings and Thy death: Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

2. In Honor of the Wound in the Left Hand of Our Divine Savior.

Praise and honor be given Thee, O most amiable Jesus, by reason of the sacred wound in Thy left hand.

By this holy wound, I beseech Thee to have pity on me and to change within me whatever is displeasing to Thee.

Grant me to be victorious over Thine enemies, so that, by the power of Thy grace, I may overcome them; and do Thou, by Thy holy and adorable death, deliver me from all dangers, present and to come, and make me worthy to share in the glory of Thy Blessed Kingdom: Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

3. In Honor of the Wound in the Right Foot of Our Divine Savior.

Praise and honor be given Thee, O sweetest Jesus, by reason of the sacred wound in Thy right foot.

By this holy and adorable wound, I beseech Thee to enable me to bring forth worthy fruits of penance for my sins.

I humbly entreat Thee, for the sake of Thine adorable death, to keep me, day and night, in Thy holy will, to preserve me from all adversity of soul and body, and, on the dreadful day of judgment, to deal with me according to Thy mercy, that I may obtain eternal joys: Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

4. In Honor of the Wound In the Left Foot of Our Divine Savior.

Praise and honor be given Thee, O sweet and merciful Jesus, by reason of the sacred wound of Thy left foot.

By this adorable Wound, I beseech Thee to grant me pardon and full remission of all my sins, so that, with Thine aid, I may escape the rigors of justice.

I entreat Thee, O good and merciful Jesus, for the sake of Thy Holy Death, to grant that at the hour of my death, I may have the grace to confess my sins with a perfect contrition, to receive the adorable Sacrament of Thy Body and, Thy Blood, and likewise, the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction for my eternal salvation. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

5. In Honor of the Wound in the Side of Our Divine Savior.

Praise and honor be given Thee, O good and sweetest Jesus, by reason of the Wound in Thy Sacred Side.

By this adorable Wound and by that immense mercy shown Longinus [1] and to us all, in allowing Thy Sacred Side to be opened, I beseech Thee, O good Jesus, that as

[1] It is related that when the Roman Centurion Longinus pierced the side of our Lord to ascertain His death, he was miraculously cured of an affection in the eyes by some of the Precious Blood falling upon it, and was in consequence thereof converted to the Christian Faith.

in Baptism, Thou didst purify me from original sin, so now Thou wouldst be pleased, by the merits of Thy Most Precious Blood, which is offered up this day over the whole world, to deliver me from all evils, past, present and to come.

I entreat Thee, by Thy bitter death, to give me a lively faith, a firm hope, and perfect charity, so that I may love Thee with my whole heart, with my whole soul, and with all my strength. Uphold me by Thy grace in the practice of good works, so that I may persevere to the end in Thy holy service and glorify Thee in time and eternity. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy death and Thy precious blood, Thou hast redeemed the world.

LET US PRAY.

O almighty and eternal God, who hast ransomed the human race by the five wounds of thy Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee, by the merits of His precious blood, to grant unto us, who, each day, venerate these same adorable wounds, to be delivered from a sudden and unprovided death: Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world withoutend. Amen.

II.

Little Office of the Holy Cross.

A FAVORITE DEVOTION OF THE GLORIOUS MOTHER S. CLARE.

AT MATINS.

V. By the Sign of the Cross :
R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.
V. O Lord, open my lips,
R. And my mouth shall declare Thy praise.
V. Come to mine aid, O God.
R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Matins,[1] Jesus, God made man for us,
Th' Eternal Father's own begotten Son,
Is sold, is seized upon by wicked Jews,
Scorned by His foes, abandoned by His own.

The Antiphon.

O Cross, deserving all our veneration, which hast brought healing to the afflicted ! How shall I find words to praise thee ! For thou hast prepared for us life everlasting.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, interpose Thy Passion, Cross, and Death between Thy judgment and

(1) Matins, the first canonical Hour, denotes the hour of *midnight*.

my soul, now, and at the hour of my death; and vouchsafe to grant unto me grace and mercy; pardon and rest to the living and the dead; peace and concord to Thy Church; and to us, sinners, life and glory everlasting: Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

AT PRIME.

V. By the Sign of the Cross:

R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.

V. Come to mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Prime,[1] our Lord is dragged to Pilate's hall,
False witnesses their accusations raise.
Men buffet Him; His hands are roughly tied.
With spittle they defile His glorious face.

The Antiphon.

O! the victory of the Cross, ensign most marvellous! Grant us to share in thy triumph in the courts celestial.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray: O Lord Jesus Christ, (*as above*).

AT TERCE.

V. By the Sign of the Cross:

R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.

(1) Prime, the second canonical Hour, denotes the *first* hour of the day, when the sun has fairly risen and the day begun, which is about 6:00 a. m.

V. Come to mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Terce,[1] they cry: "Let Him be crucified!"
A purple mantle mocks His royalty.
A crown of thorns is pressed upon His head.
Fainting, He bears His Cross to Calvary.

The Antiphon.

Death was shorn of all its terrors, when Christ, upon the Cross, destroyed the bonds of sin.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray: O Lord Jesus Christ, (*as above*).

AT SEXT.

V. By the Sign of the Cross:

R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.

V. Come to mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Sext,[1] the soldiers nail Him to the Cross.
And there, between two thieves, He hangs on high.

(1) Terce, the third canonical Hour, denotes the *third* hour of the day, which is 9:00 a. m.

(1) Sext, the fourth canonical Hour, denotes the *sixth* hour of the day, which is 12:00 o'clock noon.

When thirsting, He is given gall to drink.
Behold! His anguish thus they multiply.

The Antiphon.

By a tree were we made slaves, and by the Holy Cross are we set free. The fruit of a tree led us astray; the Son of God brought us back.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray: O Lord Jesus Christ, (*as above*).

AT NONE.

V. By the Sign of the Cross:

R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.

V. Come to mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At None[1] The Son of God expires, crying:
"Into Thy hands my spirit I commend."
A lance is thrust to pierce His heart in death.
The sun grows dim; the rocks in twain are rent.

The Antiphon.

O what work of love was that! When Life died upon the tree, Death itself was put to death.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

---

(1) None, the fifth canonical Hour, denotes the *ninth* hour of the day, which is 3:00 p. m.

MONASTERY OF S. CLARE, EVANSVILLE, IND., FOUNDED IN 1897.

(From a Photo taken in 1900.)

Let Us Pray: O Lord Jesus Christ. (*as above*).

AT VESPERS.

V. By the Sign of the Cross:

R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.

V. Come to mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Vespers,[2] He is taken from the Cross.
This fortitude none but a God could show.
Behold! What death He bore to give us life!
To open heaven's gate, He stooped thus low.

The Antiphon.

O blessed Cross! which alone was counted worthy to bear the ransom of the world. Sweet is the wood; sweet are the nails; sweet is the Burden that hung on thee. Thou art higher than all the cedars; for on thee hung the Salvation of the world; on thee Christ triumphed; and, by His death, He conquered death forever.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray: O Lord Jesus Christ, (*as above*).

---

(2) Vespers, the seventh canonical Hour, denotes the time of *sunset,* which is abou 6:00 p. m,

AT COMPLINE.

V. By the Sign of the Cross :
R. Deliver us, O our God, from our enemies.
V. Come to mine aid, O God.
R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Hymn.

At Compline.[1] the disciples bury Him.
Our hope of future life is laid to rest.
Spices are brought. The Scriptures are fulfilled.
Be Christ's sweet memory ever in my breast!

The Antiphon.

Save us, O Savior of the world, Who hast redeemed us by Thy Cross and Blood. Help us, we beseech Thee, O our God !

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.
R. Because, by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let Us Pray : O Lord Jesus Christ, (*as above*).

THE COMMENDATION.

These Hours,[2] I have performed, I offer Thee,
O Christ, with deepest love and piety:
That Thou, Who, out of love, didst die for me,
Be my sweet comfort in death's agony!
Amen.

---

(1) Compline, the seventh canonical Hour; denotes the time of retiring to rest, which is about 9 : 00 p. m.

(2) These Hours, i. e. these seven canonical Hours, so called, because instituted by the canons, i. e., the laws of the Church, and imposed by her as an obligation upon Priests and Religious.

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